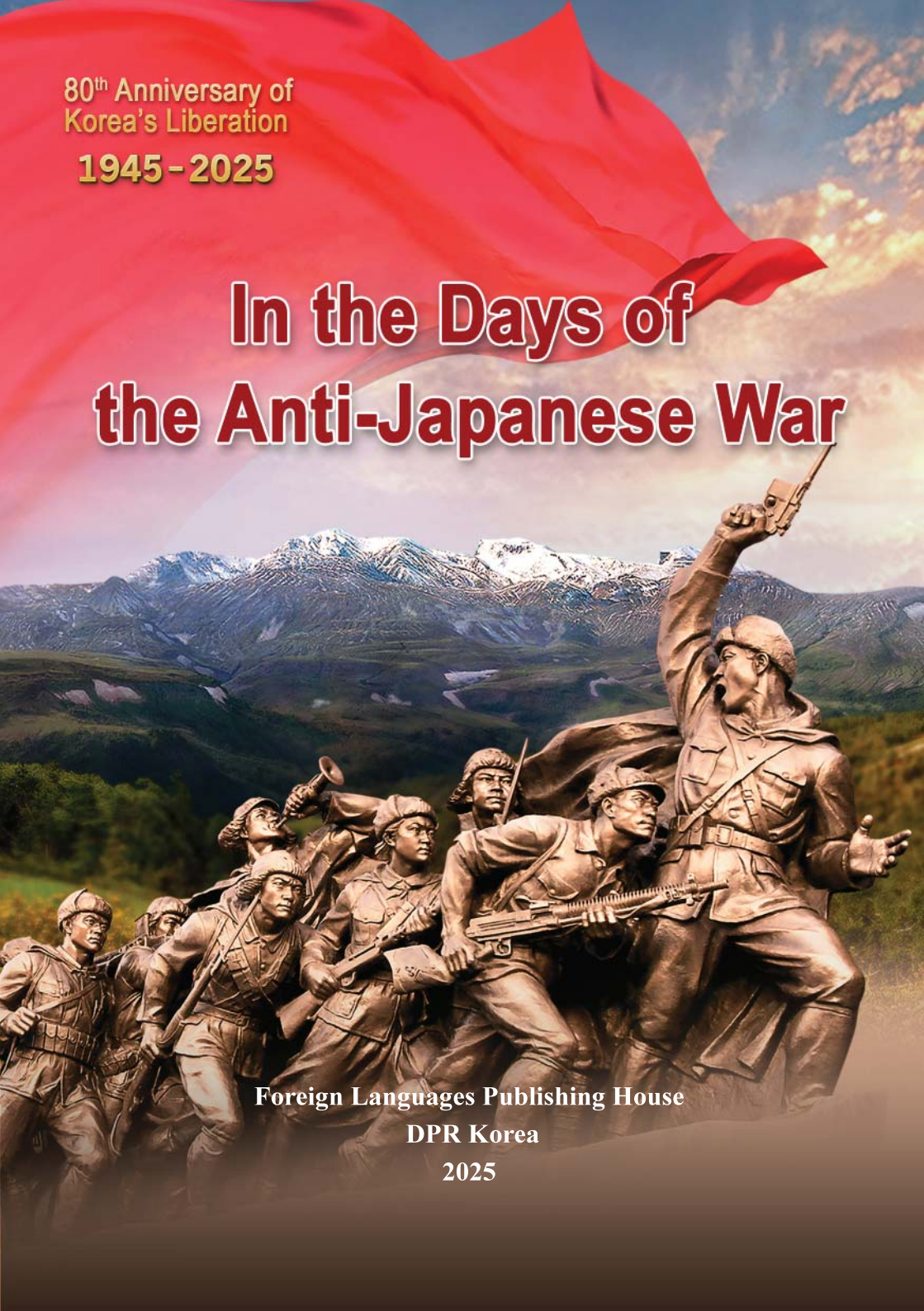
80th Anniversary of
Korea's Liberation
1945-2025

In the Days of the Anti-Japanese War



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Preface

Eight decades have elapsed since the Korean people were liberated from the Japanese imperialists' military occupation.

Korea's liberation signalled a dramatic turning point in the destiny of the nation, a new history dawning in which the people shape their destiny by themselves.

In order to achieve this great cause of national liberation, Korean revolutionaries had to live in the open on the wilderness of Manchuria. In fighting the Japanese troops armed to the teeth they had no support from a state rear or a regular army. They cleared an untrodden path, suffering heartrending sorrow and loss of lives, enduring severe hunger and cold, and overcoming indescribable trials and difficulties.

When he advanced the line of armed struggle to liberate the country by mobilizing all the patriotic forces opposed to Japanese imperialism, the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung had two pistols bequeathed to him by his father. With these weapons as his asset, he founded the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army as the first revolutionary armed force of the Juche type.

He led the guerrilla army in the protracted struggle against the imperialist aggressors, fully convinced that the day of national liberation was sure to come. The traces of blood shed by the

guerrillas still remain on the crags of Mt Paektu and along the long stretch of the Amnok River.

As he was leading the anti-Japanese war by dint of his clairvoyant wisdom, extraordinary strategy and adroit tactics, Commander Kim Il Sung believed in the Korean people and relied on them, and he performed undying exploits in achieving the historic cause of national liberation.

Etched in the annals of the anti-Japanese revolution are profound truths, precious experience and historic lessons, which are encapsulated in countless anecdotes.

The following is a selection of those anecdotes.

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Cheers Echoing Across the Tableland at Tuqidian

On April 25, 1932, a large crowd gathered on the tableland at Tuqidian, Antu County, where the founding ceremony of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army was to be held.

A man, who came all the way there, was surprised to see Commander Kim Il Sung in his early twenties. He could hardly believe his eyes, telling his neighbours that he had not imagined the Commander was so young.

In those days, a rumour was circulating beyond the bounds of the county that Commander Kim, a general clad in armour and riding a white horse, was nine feet tall and had a long beard.

The spectators were amazed to see the young general wearing the same uniform as his men.

Uniforms for the guerrilla army were made from cloth dyed green in water and boiled oak-tree bark. A five-pointed piece of red cloth inscribed with the company number was worn on the left breast of the tunic. The guerrillas wore caps with a red star insignia and white leggings. Dressed in new uniforms, they lined up in unit order in the clearing on the tableland surrounded by larch trees.

The Commander, standing in front of them, began to speak:

Comrades,

Today we are organizing the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army in order to crush the brigandish Japanese imperialists through an armed struggle and achieve the historic cause of national liberation. Our country has now become a complete colony, under the hooves of the Japanese imperialists. Our people with their 5 000-year-long history and brilliant culture are harshly exploited and oppressed as colonial slaves.

Finishing his speech, Kim Il Sung called upon them all to launch a vigorous armed struggle against the Japanese imperialists.

The speech drew loud cheers from the guerrillas and enthusiastic applause from the spectators.

The following May Day, the international holiday of the working people of the whole world, witnessed a parade by the AJPGA.

When the guerrillas entered the street of Antu with the red flag flying in the van and marched in parade, the spectators gave them a rousing welcome.

Seeing the guerrillas in their twenties wearing neat uniforms and caps with a red star insignia and marching with their guns on their shoulders, the people were filled with confidence.

Gunshots in Xiaoyingziling

After the founding ceremony of the AJPGA, Kim Il Sung decided to train the guerrillas in battles.

One day, when the guerrilla army was preparing for an expedition to south Manchuria, Kim Il Sung said to Chief of Staff Cha Kwang Su:

Since we have risen in arms, what about trying a battle?

"Do you mean it?" asked Cha.

Kim Il Sung answered:

Yes, now that we have formed a unit, we should start our battle. When we shall have to leave, we will leave, but let us fire a shot in Antu. We cannot talk about training the men without a battle.

They agreed on doing a battle in Xiaoyingziling in late May.

Xiaoyingziling was situated midway between Antu and Mingyuegou. It was a very good spot for an ambush because there was a winding cart track running through a ravine.

Kim Il Sung was informed by an underground organization that a puppet Manchukuo army convoy of carts carrying weapons and supplies had left Mingyuegou for Antu.

He, together with his men, reached Xiaoyingziling by a rapid night march and placed them on both sides of the road in ambush.

He made the rounds of where they were lying in ambush,

encouraging them to fight bravely in the first battle.

The enemy's convoy appeared in Xiaoyingziling towards midnight. The convoy was composed of 12 horse sleighs in all.

The first small unit of the ambush let the column of carts pass. When the head of the column reached about half the length of the distance along which the second small unit was lying in ambush, Kim Il Sung stood up on a rock and fired his pistol.

With that piercing sound a battle cry was raised.

The enemy soldiers, who had been taken by surprise, fired at random, unable to tell friend from foe. Finally, the enemy surrendered after suffering many casualties.

The ambush proved to be a complete success.

The news of the AJPGA's raid on a puppet Manchukuo army convoy led by a Japanese non-commissioned officer at Xiaoyingziling spread widely, going beyond the bounds of Antu and as far as Dunhua and Yanji, and everywhere the guerrillas' victory was the topic of conversation.

The Last Image

Soon after the AJPGA's first battle in Xiaoyingziling, Kim Chol Ju, a younger brother of Kim Il Sung's, came to Xiaoshahe.

Kim Il Sung asked him whether something had happened in Tuqidian.

"No, nothing has happened," said the latter, forcing a smile.

Kim Il Sung urged him to say what had happened.

Kim Chol Ju heaved a deep sigh before reluctantly opening his mouth, "It appears that mother's illness has become critical. She hasn't even eaten a spoonful of food for two days."

This reply came as a great surprise to Kim Il Sung.

The following day, he went home with a small amount of foxtail millet.

It was until after midnight that he talked with his mother about the guerrilla army's expedition to south Manchuria.

In the morning he, together with his brother, went out to collect firewood.

That evening, his mother said to him, "I never thought you would carry a sack of cereals here on your back to support your mother. I suppose you are anxious about your sick mother. I am grateful to you for your great filial devotion, but I am not of the type to be

comforted by that…. You have a greater cause to attend to. Don't you think you should carry out your father's will? You know there are many Koreans who are suffering in a worse state than me."

She went on to say, "If you acquit yourself well of your revolutionary work away from home, my illness may pass. So you should leave at once with your unit. That's my desire."

The following morning she took out four five-*yuan* notes and gave them to his son, saying:

Away from home, you will have many occasions when you are in need of money. So keep this. A man must have money in his pocket in case of emergency.

Kim Il Sung was at a loss what to do with the money.

The 20 *yuan* she had earned and saved penny by penny by working her fingers to the bone doing washing and sewing for pay! At that time, that much money was enough to buy a medium-sized cow or cereals to last a family of several persons for a whole year.

Moved to tears, Kim Il Sung stepped out of the room.

He began to walk around the house, still worried about his ailing mother and younger brothers.

At that moment his mother threw the door open and scolded him severely:

What are you worrying about that you are still here? How can a man who has turned out with a determination to win back his country cope with the great cause when he has such a weak heart and so many worries about his home? You should be thinking of

your uncles who are in prison rather than worrying about household affairs. You must think of your lost country and its people. It is already nearly twenty-two years since the Japanese burglars seized our country. If you are a true man of Korea, you should set yourself a high aim and stride ahead, shouldn't you? If in the future you ever think to come home, anxious about your mother, don't turn up before this door. I won't meet a son of that sort.

Now, Kim Il Sung said good-bye and made a deep bow to his mother.

Then he strode off. After crossing the wooden bridge down the village street, he looked back. His mother in white clothes, supporting herself against the door post, stood watching him. That was the last time he saw his mother.

This was the image he often recollected during the subsequent expedition to south Manchuria and, later, whenever facing difficulties in his revolutionary struggle.

Is a Joint Operation Impossible?

Kim Il Sung, leading an expeditionary force, left Antu for south Manchuria. They went on an arduous march for nearly one month, until they reached Tonghua safely.

The seat of Tonghua County, Tonghua is some 200 kilometres southwest of Fusong. In the 1930s it was a major base of Korean independence champions active in south Manchuria.

One summer day in 1932, when Kim Il Sung's expeditionary force was enjoying warm hospitality in Tonghua, Commander Ryang Se Bong of the Independence Army visited its lodgings to inspect the guerrillas he had brought.

The guerrillas welcomed the guest, who was very pleased to see them.

But Commander Ryang made an anti-communist speech, which changed the welcoming atmosphere into a hostile one.

He said:

To win the independence of Korea one must first of all refrain from acts that benefit the enemy. But the communist party is now acting in the favour of the enemy. They set peasants to fight against landlords in the countryside and, advocating sex equality, wives against their husbands within the family. They sow the seeds of discord within the nation and set up barriers of distrust between

nations, advocating expropriation and the overthrow of oppressors on the slightest excuse.

All the guerrillas were enraged at his speech, and Commander Ryang grew angry, insisting on his opinion.

Kim Il Sung said to him:

We are not doing things beneficial to the enemy. We fight for the liberation of the Korean nation and for the interests of the working people.

Kim Il Sung knew that Commander Ryang's hostile attitude towards communists would not change overnight.

The men of the AJPGA were in a gloomy frame of mind when they left Tonghua to avoid a conflict with the Independence Army,

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Expedition to South Manchuria

This was an expedition which the main force of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army, under the command of Kim Il Sung, made to south Manchuria between June and August in 1932.

The immediate objective of the expedition was to form a common front with the units of the Independence Army under Commander Ryang Se Bong, which were active along the Amnok River, and at the same time establish contact with armed forces in south Manchuria in order to sow seeds of the revolution in the vast land and lay the mass foundation for the armed struggle there. The expedition was also aimed at forming a united front with the Chinese anti-Japanese armed units there and expanding and strengthening the young AJPGA quickly in terms of its quality and quantity.

having failed to reach an agreement on a joint operation which was urgently needed.

Even when he left Tonghua then, Kim Il Sung did not draw a hasty conclusion that cooperation with the Independence Army was impossible.

He rather hoped that some day Commander Ryang would understand his real intention and the time would come when he would open the door to cooperation.

Later, when the Independence Army was on the verge of collapsing, Commander Ryang said to his subordinates, "I die and cannot fight Japan any more, but you remain alive and seek and go to Commander Kim Il Sung. That is the only way to survive."

Leaving this instruction, Commander Ryang closed his eyes.

True to this instruction, over 300 men of the Independence Army, who had welcomed the AJPGA in the streets of Tonghua, came to Mt Paektu four years later and joined the Korean People's Revolutionary Army.

An Old Chinese Man's Admiration

One August day in 1932, Kim Il Sung's unit was passing Xiaxiaoshahe in Antu County. He found a solitary house in the mountainous area, where he decided to settle in for the night.

The host was an old Chinese man, named Lu Xiuwen, who was enthusiastic despite his advanced age.

After asking Kim Il Sung one question after another, the old man said that the great man he respected most of all the martyrs of Korea was An Jung Gun.

Kim Il Sung asked him how he, not a Korean, knew so much about An Jung Gun.

The old man said, "There is no one in Manchuria who doesn't know of him. One man even proposed to build a bronze statue of martyr An at Harbin Railway Station. I still say to my children that they should become such a revolutionary as Sun Yat-sen and such a great man as An Jung Gun. Commander Kim, now that you have formed an army, why not slay such bigwigs as the commander of the Kwantung Army?"

Kim Il Sung could not help smiling at his naive suggestion.

He said:

What is the use of killing a man like him? As a new Ito Hirobumi appeared after Ito Hirobumi was slain, so a new Honjo will emerge

if we kill Honjo. Terrorism cannot serve a great cause.

The old man asked, "How, then, are you going to fight?"

Kim Il Sung answered:

They say that the Kwantung Army numbers 100 000, and I will fight them all.

The host exclaimed, "Wonderful, Commander Kim! You are another An Jung Gun."

Kim Il Sung said:

Thank you, but I am not worthy of your compliment. I am not as great as An Jung Gun, but I will not live as an enslaved Korean.

The Chinese man was greatly impressed by Kim Il Sung's daring pluck and mettle.

Fight the Japanese Imperialists to the Last!

Early in January 1933 Kim Il Sung got an urgent message from an operative active in the area of Laoheishan.

According to the message, the Japanese army launched all-round "punitive" operations against Wang Delin's unit that was stationed in the Luozigou area. The Chinese soldiers were rushing towards the Soviet-Manchurian border to escape the attack of the Japanese army, like so many fallen leaves being blown away by a gust of wind in autumn. Many Chinese units entered Dongning, some surrendering to the enemy and some others becoming local bandits.

Kim Il Sung decided to go to the area of Laoheishan without delay.

It was highly risky to advance to the area where a huge number of "punitive" troops were concentrated.

Kim Il Sung's unit pushed its way through deep snows in the severe cold of up to 40 degrees below zero.

The roads were thronged with enemy soldiers and aeroplanes were flying around, dropping leaflets urging the guerrillas to surrender. A few days later, Kim Il Sung and his men arrived in a forest, a stone's throw from Laoheishan.

They went to a Chinese unit nearby.

Kim Il Sung had talks with the commander of the Chinese unit, praising it for turning out in the anti-Japanese national salvation war of resistance and courageously fighting to win back the lost country.

He said:

The Japanese imperialists are stretching their tentacles of aggression into the whole of Manchuria and China proper, brutally murdering Chinese civilians here and there and destroying and plundering China's invaluable relics and cultural assets.

He went on to say:

Wherever the Japanese imperialists' tentacles of aggression reach, a resistance struggle erupts. It is a lesson taught by history that a nation can defeat invaders, however strong, when all its people rise up and fight them, braving trials and difficulties. We should bravely fight the Japanese imperialists on the common front.

Later, though all other Chinese commanders fled to China proper via the Soviet Union, the above commander's unit continued its resistance struggle.

A Mouse in a Trap

In the middle of February 1933, Kim Il Sung came back to Yaoyinggou after finishing his work with the Chinese unit in the area of Laoheishan.

The people of Yaoyinggou prepared millet cakes and buckwheat noodles for the guerrillas. In the evening there was an artistic performance given by the Children's Corps, which was followed by a joint recreation party of the guerrillas and the villagers.

When the recreation party was well underway, Kim Il Sung was informed that the Japanese garrison troops would launch a "punitive" attack against the guerrilla base the following day.

He kept the message about the enemy's intentions to himself until the recreation party was over and his men were sent to their beds.

Yaoyinggou was a naturally impregnable fortress hemmed in by steep and rocky mountains, 500m to 800m above sea level. About 16km southwest of it was Daxinggou, a base of enemy soldiers. So, in order to reach the guerrilla base, the enemy soldiers had to follow the narrow roads in a valley between the craggy mountains.

Kim Il Sung decided to annihilate the enemy soldiers on their

way to the guerrilla base.

He ordered his men to climb the hills west of Dabeigou, which were the gate to Yaoyinggou.

As dusk fell, they lay in ambush, digging themselves in on the frozen ground and gathering stones for a rock-slide.

At daybreak Japanese troops advanced on several trucks along the narrow roads between the nearby river and cliffs. They were caught in the guerrillas' ambush and scores of them were killed or wounded.

The following day, the enemy launched an attack on Yaoyinggou again, only to suffer heavy casualties before they fled.

This was the first battle the guerrillas fought in the guerrilla zone in Jiandao.

Without Seeking Any Preferential Treatment

In February 1933 Kim Il Sung, leading the main force of the AJPGA, came to Macun, Xiaowangqing, and set it as the Headquarters of the Korean revolution.

The guerrillas and other people in the Wangqing guerrilla base greeted the young general with warm hospitality.

To their regret, his uniform was so plain, the same as the guerrillas'.

Some days later, being informed that the sewing-unit members were making a separate uniform with the best cloth available, Kim Il Sung came to where they were working.

He scolded them, saying:

Why are you doing such a thing without obtaining my permission? How can I have such quality cloth used in making a uniform for myself? What I hate most is to be treated preferentially. You must not make my uniform with special cloth. Ours is a revolutionary army in which we are required to observe one discipline though we differ in position.

Some officers tried to persuade him, reminding him that it was a wish of the people, but Kim Il Sung was adamant about this.

The sewing-unit members had no other choice but to make his uniform with the same cotton fabric as was used in making others'.

The day came when all the guerrillas were provided with new uniforms.

Looking at his new uniform, Kim Il Sung said:

This uniform is really good. As I am in the same uniform as my men, it is good-looking and I feel comfortable. I like this way, looking the same as my men. I will wear this uniform, regarding it as the uniform of the revolution given to me by the people.

Throughout the subsequent long years of the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle he wore the same uniform as his men and shared weal and woe with them.

Paying for the Lost Axe

The following happened early in March 1933 when Kim Il Sung was staying in a village called Liangshuiquanzi on the Tuman River.

His lodging was an old Chinese man's house. Every morning he woke up earlier than the host and his wife, cleaning the indoors and outdoors of the house and fetching drinking water from the river. He filled a jar in the kitchen with the water drawn from a hole made by breaking the ice.

One early morning, he was breaking the ice on the river with an axe he brought from the old man's house.

It was bitterly cold outside, and the ice was thicker than ever before.

When he nearly finished breaking a hole in the ice, the head of the axe slipped from the handle and fell into the hole.

In trying to find the head of the tool he raked about for hours with a long pole with hooked prongs on its end, but it was in vain.

He came back to his lodging and offered a generous price to the host, apologizing sincerely for his carelessness.

The old man refused to accept the money, but Kim Il Sung was immovable.

Although he paid generously for the axe, he was haunted by the thought of it later on.

In May 1959 he asked a group of visitors to old battlefields of the anti-Japanese armed struggle in northeast China to apologize once again to the old man in the village of Liangshuiquanzi.

2. Relying on the Guerrilla Bases

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First People's Revolutionary Government

On his return to Wangqing from the campaigns in south and north Manchuria, Kim Il Sung was dumbfounded at the complaints against the Soviet policy that could be heard in all parts of the guerrilla base.

The "Leftists" were pushing the people, who were opposed to Japanese imperialism, towards the imperialists' side, instead of uniting them rock-solid.

They confiscated the land and property of the rich and middle peasants, not to mention those of landlords, forcing numerous people to leave the guerrilla base as they were disillusioned about the revolution. Worse still, they cold-shouldered those who had come to the guerrilla base as they were willing to join the revolution against the Japanese imperialists and avenge the murder of their family members. Such reckless "Leftist" moves resulted in countless people dropping out of the revolutionary ranks.

Kim Il Sung thought that, since life had proved that the Soviet was not suited to the guerrilla bases in east Manchuria where the task of anti-imperialist, anti-feudal democratic revolution should be addressed, it was necessary to resolutely change the form of government and adopt a policy capable of meeting the requirements of the people.

He visited district No. 5 and attended the meeting to elect the district committee of the people's revolutionary government.

He had talks with about 20 peasants from Gayahe.

He said to them:

We have decided to set up a new government to replace the Soviet government. It must represent your will. What kind of government would you like to set up?

One of them answered that if the government to be set up would make their life easier, they would ask for nothing more.

Kim Il Sung declared that a people's revolutionary government would be established in place of the Soviet government, and that the new government would be a genuine people's government.

He continued:

This government will represent and champion the interests of all the people who love their country and their fellow people. It will fulfil their most cherished desires. What are your cherished desires? The people's revolutionary government will fulfil all of your desires to own land, to have the right to work, to educate your children, and to have equality for all.

The people from Gayahe fully supported the line of the people's revolutionary government which he explained to them.

Prior to the ceremony to proclaim the establishment of the people's revolutionary government, Kim Il Sung saw to it that all expropriated private property was returned to the former owners.

At the meeting he made a speech to the effect that the people's

revolutionary government was truly a people's government.

The people's revolutionary government, which was set up in the guerrilla bases, established the Children's Corps schools and gave the children free education, and it ensured that all the population received free medical care at the hospitals at Lishugou and Shiliping in the guerrilla zone.

The people who had fled to the enemy-held area from the evils of the "Leftist" Soviet policy began to return to the guerrilla bases one by one. The guerrilla bases rang once again with the laughter of a large and harmonious community of people who trusted, loved and relied on one another.

The Man from the Comintern

In April 1933, a middle-aged man dressed in dabushanzi came to see Kim Il Sung.

The man appeared like a gentleman and had a gentleman's manners. Seeing Kim Il Sung from a distance, he smiled and raised his hand above his head in a gesture of greeting. He was so sociable that Kim Il Sung might have taken the stranger for an old acquaintance of his.

The guest was Manchurian provincial party committee member Pan, an inspector from the Comintern.

After ten or so days of sharing lodging and talking, Kim Il Sung

and the inspector became close friends.

They began talking about their careers and family backgrounds and then about political issues.

Kim Il Sung explained to him the efforts made by the Korean communists to implement the decisions of the Comintern, and then clarified his position and attitude towards its line and directives.

He continued:

I have wanted to tell a few things to the Comintern. I very much regret the Comintern's decision in the past to disband the Korean Communist Party. Factions existed not only in the Korean Communist Party, and the forging of signatures by means of potato stamps was also practised by the Indochinese Communist Party and other parties, wasn't it?

After an embarrassed silence, the inspector said:

The Indochinese Communist Party remains in existence, while the Korean Communist Party was disbanded. It is because a prominent figure like Ho Chi Minh represented Indochina in the Comintern. By contrast, in those years the ranks of the Korean communist movement contained no such outstanding figure or centre of leadership who would be recognized by the Comintern.

Kim Il Sung could understand Pan's explanation to the effect that the disbandment of the Korean Communist Party was due to the absence of a leader, a man of world renown acknowledged by the Comintern, who could resist his party's disbandment.

Kim Il Sung stressed:

We think we should have our own communist party. If a Korean does not strive to rebuild the party, he should be regarded as having abandoned the Korean revolution. We must not be like a man who shares another man's room, studying his expression, and wasting time. On the basis of this point of view, we put forward a new policy of forming grassroots party organizations first, and then establishing the party from bottom to top by expanding and strengthening them, and we established a party organization, the Society for Rallying Comrades, three years ago in line with this policy.

The inspector was surprised to hear this.

Kim Il Sung went into the details of the historical background to the formation of the first party organization in Kalun, as well as describing his own involvement in this work and its expansion.

The inspector listened with close attention.

On the day of parting from Kim Il Sung, the inspector said, "Comrade Kim, I will carry your image in my memory all my life. I am very happy to have met you in Wangqing."

Kim Il Sung said:

So am I. I am most fortunate to have met you, Comrade Pan. Frankly, I don't want to bid you farewell.

Holding Kim Il Sung's hand in his, the inspector said, "How could I wish to part? I wish that after this journey I could come to east Manchuria with my wife and work hand in hand with you. I am outdated in some ways. Please be Korea's Ho Chi Minh."

With these words, Inspector Pan took his leave of Wangqing.

Arsenals in the Thick Forests

While in Macun, Kim Il Sung paid special attention to repairing and making weapons.

He ordered his men to obtain such tools as anvils, hammers, sledges, pliers and files, which would be used in setting up a small ironworks in the valley of Macun.

This ironworks was later called Macun Arsenal or Xiaowangqing Arsenal.

Those who worked at the ironworks had almost no experience of handling iron; they were complete beginners who had never repaired weapons before.

Yet, they made efforts to make weapons, fully convinced that self-reliance was the only way to live and that the decisive factor in promoting the revolution was to enlist internal forces to the maximum.

Later these novices made bombs, repaired pistols and rifles, and developed the gunpowder needed for making bombs.

Making gunpowder was always dangerous. One could even lose one's life. The most dangerous work was charging the bombs and cartridges. And yet, in spite of this, those at the ironworks did not leave their workplace.

The development of gunpowder brought about a great change

in the production of weapons. As gunpowder became available, the production of bombs increased quickly. A bomb consisted of a fuse and a tin. Tins were sent by the underground organizations in the enemy-controlled areas and semi-guerrilla bases, and into them was inserted something like an oil bottle charged with gunpowder, the gap between the tin and oil vessel being filled with broken pieces of damaged ploughs and other steel splinters for shrapnel, and then the fuse was connected. This made a simple bomb.

The first bomb made by the workers of this arsenal was known as noise bomb. The noise bomb was later developed into a chilli bomb and then into a powerful bomb called Yongil bomb. This bomb was much more effective than a hand grenade. The Japanese were terrified of the guerrilla army's bombs.

Once gunpowder became available, the guerrillas were able to make wooden guns. When the revolutionary army fired its wooden guns the enemy was stupefied.

At that time the arsenals of the guerrilla army had hardly any modern machines or tools.

They repaired the cartridge extractor and firing pin of a rifle by filing, grinding, hammering and tempering them in fire, water and clay. Soon they were even able to repair machine-guns without any difficulty.

Such experience gained in the guerrilla bases in the first half of the 1930s was applied and developed by the arsenals built in the bases on Mt Paektu during the latter half of the 1930s.

Son of the People

Early in April 1933 Kim Il Sung's unit was marching in the vicinity of Liangshuiquanzi by the Tuman River.

When the guerrillas reached a peasant hut, he ordered a break.

Among them was one who had been suffering from injuries. As the wounded man was in need of warmth, the guerrillas went into the yard of the hut and called out to see whether there was anyone in. There was no response from inside.

Kim Il Sung took off his overcoat and spread it over the man who was lying down.

Then he picked up an axe and began to split firewood for the host, some guerrillas sweeping away snow in the yard and some others building a fire for cooking.

The owners of the house–an old man and his wife–were hiding themselves behind the doors, looking warily at the guerrillas, whom they had mistaken for Japanese soldiers.

As the guerrillas were busying themselves in the yard, the old couple came out.

While talking with the host, Kim Il Sung called him grandfather and offered him a cigarette.

After asking about his family, he said:

It seems to me that you have tilled soil for a long time. Why

can't I see chickens in the yard? Can't you afford to buy fur caps for children in this cold winter?

The old man gave a deep sigh, lamenting his family's bad luck.

Kim Il Sung said:

Koreans and Chinese live in abject poverty, not because of their bad luck. Their miserable life is due to the Japanese imperialists' and landlords' inhuman exploitation and plunder. We can live happily only after defeating the Japanese imperialists.

Before departing from the old man's hut, Kim Il Sung left some money to help him out.

Learning that his guest was General Kim Il Sung, the host said, "How come you, the Commander, chopped firewood for us?"

Kim Il Sung smiled at the old man, saying:

I am a son of the people, too, and why can't I do what they do?

Potatoes Paid for

Late in April 1933 the Wangqing guerrilla base was facing an acute food shortage.

Two guerrillas were sent to a village nearby on a mission of obtaining cereals, but they couldn't get any because of the enemy's strict control.

On their way back, they decided to glean harvested potato fields. While digging the frozen earth, they discovered a potato cellar. It

seemed to them that it was next to impossible to find out the owner of the cellar. So, they filled their knapsacks with potatoes and went back to the guerrilla base.

Upon being informed of this fact, Kim Il Sung summoned the two guerrillas.

He said to them:

Our guerrilla army has a strict rule to abide by under any trying circumstances. It is revolutionary discipline to be observed in its relations with the people. We must never lay hands on the people's property, even if it means we may die from starvation or the freezing cold. This is an iron rule for our guerrilla army, which is composed of sons and daughters of the people and fights for their interests. If we lay hands on the people's property on the excuse of our lack of cereals, how can we call ours an army for the people and the revolution? When founding the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army, we put the word *people* in its name. This mirrors our intention that we will always keep our people in mind. It is also encapsulated in the revolutionary slogan "As fish cannot live without water, so guerrillas cannot live without the people."

The two guerrillas felt guilty for what they had done, and Kim Il Sung told them to go in search of the owner of the cellar.

It took quite long for them to find out where the owner was. As ordered by their commander, they sincerely apologized and offered him a generous price for the potatoes they had taken with them.

Initial Spark of All-People Defence Warfare

One day in 1933 Kim Il Sung was informed about the enemy's imminent large-scale "punitive" operations against the Xiaowangqing guerrilla base.

Near midnight he was pondering over how to repulse the enemy, when the elder of the village came to see him.

The old man's son had fallen in action.

"You have become thin these days," said he, suggesting that they take a midnight snack at his house. Kim Il Sung followed him without objecting.

After the snack Kim Il Sung lay beside the old man.

The old man could not sleep for some reason, and he kept sighing continually.

Kim Il Sung asked the old man why he kept sighing all night long, as he was turning round on the bed to face him.

The latter said:

I cannot get to sleep. How can I sleep in peace when I have heard that thousands of the enemy are encamped at the entrance to the guerrilla base? They say that the guerrilla army will be crushed in this "mopping-up" operation. What do you think, Commander?

Kim Il Sung replied:

It is a false rumour spread by the reactionaries. But if we don't

make full preparations, the guerrilla base may collapse. So I cannot sleep, either.

The old man said, “It makes no sense for the guerrilla base to be destroyed. How can we live without this base? We would rather kiss the dust or give up the ghost.”

Kim Il Sung agreed:

You are quite right. If we are to die, then we must fall in this guerrilla base. But what should we do? The enemy numbers thousands, and our army defending Xiaowangqing is no more than one hundredth of the size of the enemy.

The old man puffed nervously at his cigar and spoke in a serious tone of voice, pushing his pillow in front of Kim Il Sung’s face, “If you are short of soldiers, I will become one for you. There are quite a few old men like me in Xiaowangqing who know how to fire a rifle. They will be able to fight if each of them is given a rifle. I think there are rifles and ammunition that the Independence Army soldiers buried somewhere near the place where we lived before. If you can find them, you can surely arm the hunters and the old men who were Independence Army soldiers in the old days as well as the young people.

This remark suggested to Kim Il Sung that the only way out of the impending difficulties was an all-people resistance.

This talk encouraged Kim Il Sung.

He said to himself:

The old man is right. When the people say they will fight and

they can win, they mean what they say. Victory in war depends on the will of the people and on how efficiently one enlists them.

This was the initial spark of all-people defence warfare, a key principle maintained by Kim Il Sung throughout his life.

Harassing Operations Behind the Enemy Lines

As the year 1934 began, the battle in defence of the Xiaowangqing guerrilla base (Operation Macun) grew fierce.

In spite of the heavy losses he suffered having invaded the guerrilla base, the enemy tenaciously attempted to prolong the battle in order to make the guerrillas and other people there die of cold and hunger, by denying them reinforcements and fresh supplies of weapons and provisions.

Kim Il Sung concluded that the only way was to strike the enemy hard and harass him behind his lines, together with continued efforts to destroy him within the defensive area.

Some cadres of the county party committee opposed this plan, saying:

How is it conceivable for the army to leave the guerrilla base when the enemy is falling upon us? This idea means deserting the people in order to save the army.

Kim Il Sung said to them:

As the enemy's forces are attempting to prolong the battles, our forces, no matter how concentrated, would never be equal to the enemy's forces, so we have decided to harass the enemy from behind. We should evacuate the population, and our guerrillas should disperse and move in groups to harass the enemy from behind. For instance, ten guerrillas equipped with rifles could take 30 or 40 unarmed young men with them to strike at the enemy from behind at his weak points. This will turn the tide of war.

Everyone was surprised to hear this, and there was no one who was willing to agree on this tactic.

Kim Il Sung said to his men:

Who will go to fight behind the enemy lines? Any of you who will follow me, come along! I don't need many. I need only half of you, and the rest must stay here to protect the people. Those who want to go with me, must break the siege tonight.

Kim Il Sung divided the unit into two detachments, one of which remained in the guerrilla base.

He, in command of the other detachment, penetrated deep into the enemy-held area.

As he expected, the area behind the enemy lines was almost deserted. His detachment struck at the enemy first in Liangshuiquanzi, destroying a puppet Manchukuo army unit and the self-defence corps, and then fell upon the barracks of the Japanese consulate police. And then, after a feinting manoeuvre far away from Liangshuiquanzi, the guerrillas again raided an

enemy convoy of trucks at Xinnangou, capturing a great amount of wheat flour and munitions. From there they slipped away to the mountainous area of Beifengwudong and made preparations for a new battle. Soon afterwards, they launched an assault on the puppet Manchukuo army soldiers, policemen and self-defence corps members in Beifengwudong. After winning a victory there, they advanced to Sidong; then they attacked the forest ranger base in Donggu, killing all the enemy at their barracks.

The enemy sustained serious casualties here and there.

Caught in a dilemma, the enemy retreated from the guerrilla base. So, the battle in defence of the Xiaowangqing guerrilla base, which lasted for scores of days, ended in victory for the guerrillas.

Reorganization of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army

After the battle in defence of the Xiaowangqing guerrilla base was over, Kim Il Sung paid attention to establishing a unified command system for the guerrilla army.

At the meeting to review Operation Macun, it was not the commanders of the companies, who had fought with Kim Il Sung's unit throughout the defence of Xiaowangqing, but company commander Han Hung Gwon, who had been far away from the zone of operations, who spoke fervently about this

problem. Han Hung Gwon said that the mission of his company in Operation Macun had been to contain a possible enemy advance to east Manchuria across the Laoyeling, but his company had not fought a single battle with the enemy, rendering no assistance to the main force in fighting. In other words, he implied that his company had not been able to attack the enemy from behind as it should during the enemy's "punitive" attack on the guerrilla bases.

The same was true of Helong County. The enemy launched his "clean-up" of the guerrilla base in Yulangcun in early November 1933. The enemy's "punitive" operations in Yulangcun had started about 15 days earlier than his attack on Xiaowangqing. If at this time the guerrillas in other counties, who had not been engaged, had attacked the enemy's rear on the principle of mutual assistance, it would have been much easier for the guerrillas in Yulangcun to repel the enemy.

This showed that since the guerrilla bases were subjected to enemy attack at different periods, all the guerrilla forces could have made their struggle easier by coordinating their actions through efficient cooperation, if only they had had a unified command and staff system for the guerrilla units in all guerrilla bases and counties.

At that time the guerrilla units were under the command of the military departments of the county party committees, so there was not a unified command system for these units.

In a nutshell, the guerrilla movement required a new form of armed force corresponding to the content and scope of the movement.

The quickest way of meeting this requirement was to merge the anti-Japanese people's guerrilla forces into a large revolutionary army.

One March day in 1934 Kim Il Sung called a meeting of the military and political cadres of the AJPGA in Macun, in which he made a speech, titled, *On Reorganizing the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army into the Korean People's Revolutionary Army*.

In this speech he referred to the need to reorganize the AJPGA into the KPRA and specified such details as establishing an organizational system and party guidance system for the KPRA.

Soon afterwards, the AJPGA was reorganized into the KPRA.

The Sound of the Mouth Organ Ringing Across North Manchuria

In mid-September 1934 Zhou Baozhong and other commanders of the anti-Japanese armed forces in north Manchuria sent a messenger to Kim Il Sung, requesting the KPRA's assistance.

Late in October Kim Il Sung's unit set out on the first expedition to north Manchuria.

When the expeditionary force arrived in Ningan, the local people were frightened as they knew nothing about the KPRA.

When the expeditionary soldiers in their snow shoes and puttees appeared in the distance, they would call their women into the houses

and shut their doors, shouting "The 'Koryo red army' is coming!"

In those days the Japanese imperialists were making vicious anti-communist propaganda.

Life had never been like this in east Manchuria.

Kim Il Sung pondered how to win the villagers' hearts.

He instructed the company political instructors to bring all their good mouth organ players to Headquarters. When they had gathered, he checked them one by one.

A soldier from the Yanji company played the mouth organ well enough to perk up an audience. He sometimes produced the sound of an accordion concert on his mouth organ.

Kim Il Sung instructed a company political instructor to take the mouth organ concert group to the village and try to move their hearts, and tasked the secretary of the district party committee with buying necessary mouth organs by seeking help from underground organizations.

The group started by clearing the snow from the front yard of a house in the centre of the village. After posting a sentry on the fairly large area of ground, two soldiers played a mouth organ duet as the first item on the programme. Two or three boys who were spinning tops in a nearby lane ran towards the fence of the yard to watch the performance. Other children also came running towards the show from other lanes, hitching up the waistbands of their trousers as they came.

The mouth organ duet began with *The Song of General*

Mobilization, then changed into *The Children's Song* and *How Far Have We Come?* The children, charmed by the beautiful melody of the mouth organ, followed the song and clapped their hands. Some children ran about the village shouting that the "Koryo red army" soldiers from Jiandao were dancing. Soon afterwards, the grown-ups began to gather. At first, some approached the performance and gazed at the "musicians" of the "Koryo red army."

When 40 to 50 people had gathered to see the performance, the mouth organ concert group played *Arirang*. This attracted the whole village, and the audience rapidly increased to one hundred, two hundred and at last three hundred.

The soldiers then switched over to political information work for them.

The villagers' response was surprising.

They now opened their hearts and showed warm hospitality to the soldiers.

Song of the Anti-Japanese War

In January 1935, on his way back from the first expedition to north Manchuria, Kim Il Sung caught a chill on Tianqiaoling, and it was so bad that he could hardly walk.

If a person with this sickness drank a cup of honey and warmed himself on a heated floor, he could sweat the cold out, but it was

impossible to expect such luxury in an uninhabited wilderness at a height of 1 000 metres above sea level.

Worse still, the enemy–Kuto's company–was in hot pursuit, despite suffering casualties. Kuto was known as the "king of punitive operation." He was awarded the title of "war hero" after his death for his merited services in Manchuria.

When he appeared in Tianqiaoling, Kuto gave his men the following orders:

Commander Kim has lost his ability to command due to his serious illness. So we need not attack him. Simply pursue his unit until they are exhausted. Pick them off one by one while pursuing them. That way we will kill all his communist army within a month.

Many soldiers in the expeditionary force sacrificed themselves to check the pursuing enemy, but the enemy was incomparably strong in terms of number.

When he recovered consciousness, Kim Il Sung saw only 16 men around himself.

He often slipped into a coma and came out of it after a long while. One day he lost consciousness in the morning and did not regain it even at dusk.

When he was in a coma, one of his men cried out, "Comrade Commander, if you die, Korea will be hopeless."

Other comrades-in-arms burst into tears all at once.

At this anxious cry, his eyes opened.

Giving a look around, Kim Il Sung said:

All of you should be resolute. Come what may, we should think first of our motherland and the revolution. As our native land is soaked with blood, how can we die? We must not die and we have no right to die.

The following day, when he regained consciousness, Kim Il Sung called out the lyrics of a song, which he improvised.

Louder is the sound of Japanese combat boots
Trampling upon our lovely land
Humiliating tens of millions of our people
Murdering, plundering and committing arson.

My parents, your brothers and their wives and children
Are shedding blood at the point of the Japs' bayonet.
My house and your farmland are reduced
To ashes and desert land by the enemy.
…

Rise and unite, the working masses
Do not betray our firm resolve, fight on.
Let's shout hurrahs of triumph
After defeating white terrorism under the red flag.

This was how *Song of the Anti-Japanese War* was born.

Encouraged by this revolutionary song, the expeditionary force

broke through the enemy's encirclement and crossed the snow-covered mountains of Tianqiaoling.

Jo Thaek Ju's Family

When his men reached the house of old man Jo Thaek Ju at Dawaizi on their way back from the first expedition to north Manchuria, Kim Il Sung was still in a coma.

The house was in a remote mountain, some 12 kilometres away from the village of Dawaizi.

The whole family tended Kim Il Sung with all sincerity.

The following morning, he woke up, feeling the old man's calloused hand, which was lightly holding his right wrist. In this hand he felt the warmth of his grandfather's hand in Mangyongdae as he had touched his forehead and cheeks in his childhood.

Kim Il Sung asked the old man where he was.

Jo Wal Nam, the orderly who was sitting beside the old man all night long, burst into tears and reported in a single breath how the expeditionary force had survived the crisis.

After listening to what Jo had to say, Kim Il Sung thanked the old man and said that he owed his life to the family.

"Don't mention it. God gave birth to you, General Kim, and you have been saved in this log-cabin by God's will, not by my family," said the old man.

Kim Il Sung said:

Grandfather, I don't think I'm worthy of your compliment. It is too much to compare me with a general born of the Divine will. I am the son and grandson of the common people; I was born into a nameless peasant family. As a soldier of Korea my services have been too little.

The old man said, "You are too modest. The whole world knows what distinguished services you have rendered in war. I am a mere ignoramus who makes a bare living tilling plots at land in these backwoods, but I have heard all the news going around in the three provinces of northeast China."

The old man's was a family of fourteen. Kim Il Sung thought that it was unreasonable and went against common sense for a number of able-bodied men greater than the 14 members of the family to be living on them and taking so much out of their poor living earned from slash-and-burn tillage.

Some days later, despite the family's dissuasion, he ordered his men to prepare for departure.

Choe Il Hwa, a daughter-in-law of the old man, packed three days' provisions for the journey in the soldiers' knapsacks. She prepared them by pounding and polishing cereals through the night. She also gave them chilli bean paste and cooked rice balls wrapped in the white birch bark to eat on the way.

When taking leave, Kim Il Sung said to the old man:

I came to this house on a man's back, but now I shall return to

the guerrilla base on my own two feet. But for your family, I would not have recovered or survived. I will never forget your kind help.

Teary-eyed, Choe Il Hwa helped some soldiers shouldering their knapsack, saying:

I have cooked meals for so many people for so long years, but I have never seen such a polite man as Commander Kim. He is still in poor health, and he is going to leave, not to be a burden on this family. How deep his concern for the people is! Please take good care of him.

Love Humans

Back from the first expedition to north Manchuria, Kim Il Sung suffered a relapse.

Spending days bedridden, his heart broke as he thought of the chaotic situation in the guerrilla bases.

In those days the anti-"Minsaengdan" campaign was proceeding in an ultra-"Leftist" way across the guerrilla bases in Jiandao.

When setting out on the expedition to north Manchuria, Kim Il Sung had left behind many men of his unit in the guerrilla bases, but most of the hardcore elements had been executed. Other people, who just a few months before had been working in the Wangqing valley in the cause of the revolution, had scattered, hurling curses upon the "Leftists" and abandoning the guerrilla bases.

Kim Il Sung strongly urged the leadership of the east Manchuria party organization to convene a meeting to rectify the mistake in the anti-"Minsaengdan" campaign.

A few days later, he received a letter informing him of a meeting that was to be held at Dahuangwai.

As he was still in poor health, his men dissuaded him from attending the meeting. They were well aware how cold-hearted the manipulators of the "purge" were.

Kim Il Sung said to them:

"Minsaengdan"

This was a counter-revolutionary spy organization set up in February 1932 by the Japanese imperialists to undermine the revolutionary ranks from within.

The "Minsaengdan," acting under the manipulation of the Japanese imperialists, clamoured ostensibly for the interests of the Korean nation. But, in effect, it was a spy organization for stratagem manufactured by the Japanese imperialists to paralyse the anti-Japanese spirit of the Korean people, do harm to Korean revolutionaries through trickery and disrupt the revolutionary ranks from within by driving a wedge between the Korean and Chinese peoples.

The anti-"Minsaengdan" campaign proceeded in an ultra-"Leftist" way, continuing for three years when there was no "Minsaengdan," and this made an extremely harmful impact on the Korean revolution. It was attributable to the vicious Japanese imperialists' stratagem and the vile political ambitions of some "Left" opportunists and factional flunkeyists–who were taken in by the enemy's plots–at the helm of the Manchurian Provincial Party Committee, the East Manchuria Special District Party Committee and the county and district party organizations of different levels.

Comrades, I must tread this path, whatever future may hold for me, life or death. If I do not go to Dahuangwai, I shall only invite self-destruction. A critical moment has arrived for us to save the destiny of the Korean communists, and the Korean revolution from crisis. A confrontation cannot be avoided, and black and white has to be cleared.

The meeting went on for about ten days.

The argument began to grow heated when the "Leftists" insisted that most of the Koreans in east Manchuria were "Minsaengdan" members or suspects and that the guerrilla bases were "Minsaengdan" training centres.

Kim Il Sung refuted this claim, saying:

If 70 per cent of the Koreans in east Manchuria and 80 to 90 per cent of the Korean revolutionaries are "Minsaengdan" members or suspects, as some of you claim, it means that I and other Korean comrades present here are members of it. If so, are you holding this meeting with the "Minsaengdan"?

The people present began to stir.

Kim Il Sung went on:

The allegation that 70 per cent of the Koreans in east Manchuria belong to the "Minsaengdan" implies that all the Koreans except aged people, children and women are "Minsaengdan" members. If so, is the "Minsaengdan" fighting for the revolution in east Manchuria, in a bloody war against their masters?

All kept silent.

His assertion met with an instant rebuff from Cao Yafan.

Cao said, "You're flatly denying the existence of the 'Minsaengdan.' However, that is your subjective view. There are now hundreds of 'Minsaengdan' suspects in gaols. They have confessed with their own mouths that they have joined the 'Minsaengdan' and have written confessions with their own hands. What do their confessions mean?"

Kim Il Sung countered in anger:

I have been to your gaols and interviewed dozens of your suspects, and none of them admitted his confession. You are now manufacturing a "Minsaengdan" which is not a "Minsaengdan."

He added:

Comrades, stop gambling on people's destinies. Treat human beings as humans, treat comrades as comrades, and treat the people as people. Aren't we fighting to change and transform the world with the weapon of human love, love for our comrades and love for the people? If we lack this love, how do we differ from the bourgeoisie or the bandits? If we mock at people in the name of "purge" any further, the people will turn against us for ever, and our posterity will not forgive us.

Cao sat still, tongue-tied.

Motive in Dissolving Guerrilla Bases

Dissolving the existing guerrilla bases and launching into wider areas for active large-unit operations was a new line that Kim Il Sung brought up for discussion at the Yaoyinggou meeting in March 1935.

This line was supported by the overwhelming majority of the military and political cadres attending the meeting.

Yet, some objected to it, saying:

What's all this silly talk about relinquishing the guerrilla bases? Why did we build them in the first place if we're to abandon them? Why did we shed our blood for three to four years defending them and starving in rags? You say that we should quit the guerrilla bases and evacuate the people to the enemy-held areas. Doesn't this mean throwing the people right into the jaws of death, the people who have shared life in the shadow of death, forming an integral whole with the army? Can the revolutionary army conduct guerrilla warfare without relying on the military and political stronghold called the guerrilla bases? If the revolutionary people tempered in the guerrilla bases go to enemy-held areas, doesn't it mean that we'd be losing tens of thousands of revolutionary masses whom we have trained with so much effort?

Some others nodded in agreement.

The participants in the meeting were now divided into two groups, one for dissolving the guerrilla bases and the other against it, and bickered with each other.

Kim Il Sung had felt his heart breaking when deciding to dissolve the guerrilla bases.

Then why did he have to make such a decision?

In view of the prevailing situation at the time, the frontal confrontation with a powerful enemy having enormous military potentials while being confined in fixed guerrilla bases–the liberated areas–could be called pure adventurism by the measure of all fair yardsticks.

If it had become engrossed in defending the exposed guerrilla bases, the revolutionary army would have ended up in a loss of military initiative and in being drawn into an endless war of attrition. Then, the revolutionary forces trained for several years would have broken up. This would have resulted in playing into the hands of the enemy frenziedly trying to crush all the soldiers and people in the guerrilla bases through three-dimensional warfare.

This was why Kim Il Sung advanced the policy of dissolving the guerrilla bases.

He won over those who were adamant about defending the guerrilla bases, and the meeting adopted a resolution on dissolving these zones.

3. Active Large-Unit Operations

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65 ‖ “Informing on” the Guerrillas

68 ‖ Strange Relationship

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No Mercy for Whoever Harms the People

Sidaogou was a small rural village, some eight kilometres away from Luozigou.

Kim Il Sung formed an anti-Japanese association, peasants' association and other organizations with a view to transforming this village on a revolutionary pattern.

The village was a key link in the whole chain of defending the Wangqing guerrilla base.

Puppet Manchukuo Army

This was an army of the puppet Manchukuo rigged up by the Japanese invaders after their occupation of Manchuria.

In March 1932 the Japanese imperialists rigged up the puppet Manchukuo in Manchuria and formed this puppet Manchukuo army in a bid to repress the Korean and Chinese peoples' revolutionary struggle there.

This army took an active part in the Japanese imperialists' war for continental invasion, ruthlessly suppressing the people's anti-Japanese struggle for national salvation. As a cat's paw of the Japanese army, it engaged in the "punitive" operations against the Korean People's Revolutionary Army and the guerrilla bases, murdering innocent civilians wherever it went. It was disbanded in 1945, with Japan's defeat and the collapse of the puppet Manchukuo.

On the 15th day of the first month in 1935 by the lunar calendar, the village was reduced to ashes overnight by a Jingan army unit's "punitive" operation.

The unit, based in Wangbaowan, Laoheishan, Dongning County, was composed of over 300 soldiers, most of whom were sons of landlords and capitalists. As an "elite" unit of the puppet Manchukuo army, it was a "steel-strong" force, as called by the Japanese.

Upon being informed that Sidaogou became a revolutionary village, the unit stealthily encircled the village at dawn and mowed down the villagers indiscriminately by a fusillade of heavy and light machine-guns.

Jingan Army

This was the most stubborn force of the puppet Manchukuo army.

As an armed force under the direct control of the puppet Manchukuo government, the Jingan army was made up of the pro-Japanese elements of landlord and capitalist origin. Most of its officers were the Japanese aggressor army's service personnel on active duty; among its non-commissioned officers and machine-gunners were many Japanese men with rich combat experience; many of its soldiers received regular military training.

The Jingan army was proactive in suppressing the people and was involved in the "punitive" operations against the Korean People's Revolutionary Army and the Chinese anti-Japanese armed units. The KPRA dealt hard blows at this army in numerous battles such as the battle of Laoheishan.

It was disbanded in August 1945 with Japan declaring its surrender.

They went wild, shooting machine-guns at those running out of their houses, bayoneting the corpses, throwing them into the houses and setting fire to them.

There were only a few survivors in the village of several dozen houses.

In mid-June Kim Il Sung organized a battle in revenge for the tragedy of Sidaogou.

He decided to use the alluring tactic in this battle.

He withdrew his unit to Luozigou in broad daylight so that the enemy could see the movement and believe that the guerrillas had withdrawn somewhere else.

That night he moved the unit back secretly and lay in ambush in the forest near Wangbaowan where the Jingan army unit was stationed.

Then he disguised ten or so guerrillas as mountain rebels and sent them to Wangbaowan. They made a great fuss, grabbing donkeys from the villagers and ripping off the fences of their vegetable gardens, before returning to the unit.

But the Jingan army soldiers did not fall into the trap on the first day for some unknown reason.

The following day, Kim Il Sung dispatched a group to lure the enemy again.

Only then did the Jingan army soldiers begin to chase them en masse.

When the enemy were all in the mountain valley where his men

were lying in ambush, Kim Il Sung aimed at a Japanese instructor, who fell at the first shot.

The guerrillas opened fire.

Being encircled in all directions, the more than 100 enemy soldiers were shot dead in a few minutes.

The gunshots that rumbled in the valley of Laoheishan were a declaration that the revolutionary army would show no mercy for whoever harmed the people.

Gunfire Rings Out in the Dahuoshaopu River

After suffering heavy casualties in the battle of Laoheishan, the Japanese imperialists mobilized a huge force of the Kwantung Army, the puppet Manchukuo army, police and the self-defence corps to attack Taipinggou, which was a base of the KPRA.

Kim Il Sung decided to use the mortars captured by his men in the above battle and destroy the enemy troops in the Dahuoshaopu River.

One June day in 1935, the enemy began its attack at last on Taipinggou. Kim Il Sung deployed his units on the mountain behind Taipinggou and set up the command post near the mortar battery.

The enemy began crossing the Dahuoshaopu River on boats.

When the boats reached the deepest point of the river, Kim Il Sung ordered the mortar battery to open fire.

Soon afterwards, one of the mortars blew up an enemy boat in the middle of the river. The enemy gave up the crossing and fled in terror to their positions.

Kim Il Sung embraced the commander of the battery and congratulated him on the victory.

The rumbling of the mortars on the Dahuoshaopu River was a historical cry, heralding the birth of the country's artillery force. The enemy trembled with fear at the boom.

An officer of the puppet Manchukuo army, who had fled to Luozigou in terror at the KPRA's mortar fire after attempting to cross the Dahuoshaopu River, said, "The people's revolutionary army is really something mysterious. It captured mortars only yesterday and today has the skill of hitting a target with only the second shell. Who can rival such an army? It's a fool's job to do that. I will never fight Kim Il Sung's army even if it means a Japanese sword on my neck."

Mortars Rumble in North Manchuria

In the middle of June in 1935 the situation in north Manchuria demanded that the main force of the KPRA move to the region and raise the fierce flames of anti-Japanese struggle.

Kim Il Sung embarked on the second expedition to north Manchuria with a view to strengthening the anti-Japanese allied front with Chinese units.

In July his unit arrived in Shandongtun, where he met Zhou Baozhong, commander of the 5th Corps of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army.

Zhou came out to a place 2.5 miles from his secret camp and greeted Kim Il Sung.

Soon, Kim Il Sung was informed of an imminent attack by a large enemy force.

The main force of the 5th Corps was in Muling and in the northwestern area of Ningan County in those days. The force of the 4th Corps was not great, either. The enemy troops were twice as large.

Zhou asked Kim Il Sung whether they should fight or avoid the enemy.

Kim Il Sung decided to fight.

He thought that the demonstration of the KPRA's strength

in north Manchuria was indispensable to enable it to attain its expedition aims.

Moreover, the odds were then on the KPRA's side.

His plan was to defeat the enemy with the help of the mortars whose power was demonstrated in the battle of Taipinggou.

He ordered his men to take up positions, where they could meet the attacking enemy and prevent them from pouncing on the village of Shandongtun and harming the villagers, and then gave each unit appropriate combat orders. The gunners of the mortar battery and the crack shots of the heavy machine-gun company calculated the firing data required to counter the enemy's potential approach and awaited his orders.

The enemy, approaching at a terrifying speed on a mountain path, climbed the mountain to occupy the area, northwest of Shandongtun. Kim Il Sung allowed them to close in as near as 150-200 metres from where his men were, and then fired a signal shot. A salvo of gunfire followed. The enemy's survivors retreated and then attempted to attack again along the southern ridge of the mountain across the Liangshuilingzicun River. But they were caught in an ambush there, suffering heavy casualties.

Now, as ordered by Kim Il Sung, the heavy machine-gun company opened fire. The enemy soldiers were dumbfounded at first, but attacked tenaciously, treading on the dead bodies of their companions.

This time the mortars blazed. The shells flew whistling in the air

one after another and exploded among the packed enemy.

As the survivors began to flee, the mortars fired at them. Driven to a dead end, the enemy ran helter-skelter amid the gunsmoke, before taking flight in all directions under cover of darkness.

The enemy soldiers had paid so dearly in this battle that they did not dare provoke the KPRA afterwards. Moreover, when the KPRA sent them a letter the enemy even sent it military supplies like grain, edible oil and footwear.

The enemy trembled at the rumbling of the mortars, but the people bubbled over with joy.

"Informing on" the Guerrillas

The following happened when Kim Il Sung's unit, which was going on the second expedition to north Manchuria, dropped in at the village No. 4 in Qinggouzi, Emu County.

Qinggouzi was not so far away from the Emu County town, which was a base of a Japanese army unit. It was divided into several villages, among them villages No. 4, No. 5, No. 6 and No. 7.

Liu Yongsheng was a head of one hundred households in the village No. 4.

On seeing that Kim Il Sung's unit refrained from imposing any burdens on the people, and instead gathered together around bonfires at night to hold recreation parties, dance and study, Liu considered

the unit an exceptional army. The soldiers he had seen before had all been hordes of men who had lorded it over and yelled at the people, regardless of the names of their armies. To his surprise, however, the "Koryo red army" from Jiandao fetched water and swept the yards for the people and cut the children's hair.

One day Liu informed Kim Il Sung that the Japanese garrison and puppet Manchukuo army stationed in the village No. 6 were preparing to assault his village.

When he heard about this, Kim Il Sung ordered his unit to go to bed.

Liu found this strange. He kept going in and out of the house.

Kim Il Sung said to him:

Our unit is defending the village like a fortress, so don't worry so much. Please go to bed.

But Liu was still anxious, all in a flutter. He said, "But, how can the soldiers defend the village like a fortress, when they go to sleep so early?"

Kim Il Sung comforted Liu, saying:

We've posted sentries. The "Koryo red army" does not make wild claims. So you can have a sound sleep tonight. And tomorrow morning, after we've left the village, go to the enemy and report that the "Koryo red army" has been to your village. Tell them all you have seen.

"You mean report? I've no intention of filing a complaint against such a wonderful army as yours," said Liu, with his eyes wide open.

Kim Il Sung added:

This is my earnest request. Do as you're told and don't refuse. This is the only way for us, you and the village to survive. Just wait and you'll understand why.

Kim Il Sung asked Liu to "inform on" the guerrillas, in a bid to lure the enemy out of the concentration village. He calculated that this would also prevent the enemy from harming the villagers after his unit left the village.

At dawn the following day Liu ran to the enemy and reported that he saw the "Koryo red army" moving to the village No. 5.

On receiving the report, the enemy sent hundreds of "punitive" troops to chase the guerrillas on the march.

The Japanese garrison, committed to this battle, ended up falling into a trap and being annihilated. Only one man narrowly escaped death under the barrage of the guerrillas. A plane came to his rescue, but it accidentally crashed on landing and the man also went to "heaven."

Later, the Japanese imperialists set up a "monument to the loyal souls" in the village No. 6 in Qinggouzi.

Strange Relationship

It happened early in 1936.

One day, when dusk was falling, a carriage was approaching the house of a landlord where Kim Il Sung and his men were staying. Soon it pulled up in front of the house and a lady stepped out with the help of a soldier. She asked the servants at the gate to guide her into the house, saying that she would like to warm herself for a while. She was wrapped in two fox-fur overcoats, and her escorts were soldiers of the puppet Manchukuo army.

The servants, who were guerrillas on sentry duty, told Kim Il Sung about this lady.

Kim Il Sung let her come inside.

He offered her a cup of tea and pushed the brazier closer to her, so that she could keep warm.

He said to her:

We're the people's revolutionary army. The people here call us the "Koryo red army." The "Koryo red army" is not a gang of "bandits," which harms people's lives and property, as the Japanese allege. We only fight against the Japanese imperialists and their lackeys who trample on Korea and China, and we never do any harm to people's lives and property. Please set your mind at rest.

At that moment a soldier told Kim Il Sung that the woman was

the wife of the commander of a regiment of the puppet Manchukuo army, adding that she was going to her parents' home.

As Kim Il Sung was talking to her, the lady looked up and said in surprise, "Perhaps I am wrong, Mr Commander... excuse me, but aren't you Kim Song Ju?"

This was a surprise to Kim Il Sung as well.

He could not disregard the fact that the lady, whom he had met by chance in north Manchuria far away from Jiandao, knew his childhood name.

He said to her:

It's indeed strange to hear my childhood name in this land of Emu. I am Kim Song Ju or Kim Il Sung. But how on earth do you know me, madam?

The lady answered, "When you led the student and youth movement in Jilin, I attended a girls' middle school there."

Kim Il Sung said that he was very glad to meet her.

The lady resumed, "When the campaign against the projected railway between Jilin and Hoeryong was launched, I also took part in the students' demonstration. I still remember seeing you making a speech. Today I am deeply moved to see you in military uniform, and I feel so ashamed of myself."

Seeing tears gathering in her eyes, Kim Il Sung consoled her:

Don't feel too mean. The situation at home and abroad calls on all the sons, daughters and intellectuals of the Chinese nation, who love their motherland and fellow countrymen, to fight the Japanese and

save the country. There's no reason to think that you shouldn't fight the Japanese imperialists, because you're a regimental commander's wife.

The lady said, "You mean that there's a way for me to fight the Japanese?"

Kim Il Sung said yes and continued:

If you influence your husband positively and make sure that he doesn't carry out "punitive" operations against the revolutionary army, then you will be contributing to the anti-Japanese struggle. Most importantly, he shouldn't forget that he's Chinese.

The lady said, "Although a regimental commander, my husband is not doing it, because he wants to. He remains true to the national conscience. I will prevail on him as you say, so that he won't mobilize his men in 'punitive' action. Please believe me."

She went on, "It is like a godsend to meet you today. You have revived my days in Jilin, and are now leading me and my husband along the path of renewal. I will remember it for the rest of my life and live like a daughter of the Chinese nation."

Later, influenced by this woman, her husband joined the anti-Japanese struggle.

A Festival of Victors

The southern shore of Lake Jingbo, an unprecedented scenic spot in Manchuria, is home to a small village called Nanhutou, which means village on the southern tip of the lake.

The village Beihutou is located on its northern shore. Several miles up, the Xiaojiaqi River flows into Lake Jingbo; there used to be two old log-cabins in a deep valley at the foot of a mountain.

These were where the Nanhutou meeting was held in late February 1936, attended by 30 to 40 Korean military and political cadres and some Chinese revolutionaries.

Among the Chinese was Wei Zhengmin, who had been to the Comintern.

Wei conveyed the opinions of the Comintern at the meeting on some issues Kim Il Sung had submitted at the Dahuangwai and Yaoyinggou meetings and its directives.

The meeting expressed its deep gratitude to Wei for his journey to Moscow despite his poor health and congratulated him on the good results.

In his report Kim Il Sung reviewed the experience of the military and political activities the guerrilla army had carried out in the areas along the Tuman River in the first half of the 1930s.

He made proposals on the important tasks facing the Korean communists in a period when they greeted a new turning-point in the revolution, and the new strategic policies for implementing them.

In other words, he advanced new ways of ensuring a major upsurge in the overall Korean revolution centring on the anti-Japanese armed struggle, including policies to transfer the main force of the KPRA to the border point and the area around Mt Paektu and gradually extend the armed struggle to the homeland, expand the movement of the anti-Japanese national united front, and step up moves to found a party. He brought all these points up for discussion.

All attending the meeting could not suppress their surging emotions when Kim Il Sung proposed forming a large unit and advancing to the Mt Paektu area.

The meeting adopted the strategic policy on the organization of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland and making preparations for founding a Communist Party on a nation-wide scale.

The meeting could be called a festival of victors.

The Korean communist movement, shunned by the Comintern, parties of fraternal countries, and by the Korean people, albeit in part, owing to the factional strife among early communists, the break-up of the Korean Communist Party and the mistakes committed by the "Leftist" opportunists in the struggle against the

“Minsaengdan,” could remove these stains of the past and help the Korean revolutionaries embark on the ever-victorious road with the Nanhutou meeting as a momentum.

4. The Birth of a New Division

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Sorrow Lurking in Happiness

Some days after the Nanhutou meeting, Kim Il Sung left for the secret camp in Qinggouzi as he was determined to advance to the Mt Paektu area.

The secret camp was a supply service base in which there were guerrillas who had taken part in the expedition to north Manchuria and came from east Manchuria, as well as old and infirm persons, sick and wounded soldiers, and parentless children.

Upon arriving at the camp, Kim Il Sung gathered together all the soldiers and civilians there and informed them of the decisions adopted at the Nanhutou meeting.

When he announced the Comintern's recognition of the anti-"Minsaengdan" struggle in Jiandao as ultra-"Leftist" and its declaration of the inalienable and inviolable right of the Korean people to fight for the Korean revolution, they shed tears, saying that now they could go to their homeland and home villages, and fight a decisive battle in the homeland against the Japanese imperialists.

No one seemed to think that he or she would have to stay in north Manchuria.

However, Kim Il Sung broached the need for a painful leave-taking:

Comrades, please recall! Whenever a new situation emerged in

the dialectical course of the armed struggle, we were obliged to bid farewell to each other. Today is no exception, when a new turning-point in the Korean revolution has been marked by the Nanhutou meeting, so we must prepare for such a farewell. After the "February 26 incident," the military fascist clique of Japan is more intent on their northward aggression than ever before. You know full well that the Japanese imperialists have occupied northern China, including Qiqihar, and are resorting to ceaseless provocations along the Soviet-Manchuria border in search for an excuse to invade the Soviet Union. The guerrilla units in north Manchuria endeavour to consolidate the anti-Japanese forces to cope with this. But they experience great difficulties owing to a shortage of hard-core forces. So they requested our assistance on several occasions. If all of us proceed towards Mt Paektu in such a situation, what will happen?

Kim Il Sung now announced the projected shake-up he had thought over and over since leaving Nanhutou.

The soldiers, who had always followed his orders, pleaded with him to take them to the homeland. It took hours for him to persuade his men.

When taking leave, these men smiled at him, hiding their heartrending sorrow and hardening their determination to return to the homeland after defeating the Japanese imperialists.

At a Short Distance from His Mother's Grave

It happened when Kim Il Sung, leading a unit of the KPRA, was passing Antu on their march to the Mt Paektu area.

Scanning the stretch of the familiar rolling hills, he glimpsed a distant view of the Xiaoshahe hill, where he had declared the foundation of the AJPGA. The grave of his mother Kang Pan Sok was located on a sunny place, a little way down from the top of the hill.

He stood still on the hillock without realizing that his men had gone down.

An orderly turned back from descending the hillock.

"Why don't you come down the hillock?" asked the orderly.

Kim Il Sung only now awakened from reverie.

The orderly asked again, "What are you thinking about? I have heard that your mother's grave is near here. Probably…"

Kim Il Sung said that he had been thinking about his mother.

The orderly told him that he should pay a visit to his mother's grave.

His yearning for her grew stronger, yet he declined, saying that he had no time.

The orderly pleaded, "Nevertheless, it would be too unfeeling

not to. It is only a hailing distance to Xiaoshahe. I was told that your younger brother is living in Tuqidian valley."

Kim Il Sung said that even if time allowed him to visit, he could not, adding that his mother herself would not want him to.

The orderly wondered "Why not?"

Kim Il Sung explained:

As her last wish, she said that I should not move her grave before Korea gains independence. I do not call at her grave, because I respect her last wish.

Tears brimming in his eyes, the orderly said, "Will Korea fail to gain independence if you call at the grave? Pease pay her a visit."

Kim Il Sung still refused:

I was not an obedient son in her lifetime, so I want to be obedient, at least after her death. Don't tell me what to do. I haven't done anything great yet, so how can I visit her grave?

The officers of the unit persuaded him to visit Xiaoshahe, but the latter declined, going down the hill.

Elixir of Life

Kim Il Sung's unit made a major stopover on its way from Nanhutou to Mt Paektu at the rear base of the Independent 1st Division of the KPRA, located in Mihunzhen on the Mudanling Mountain Range.

Mihunzhen was situated in a mountain, where even a man who had been there once or twice could lose his way.

At first Kim Il Sung's unit was also at a loss for how to find the camps. Fortunately it came across the soldiers of the Independent 1st Division.

Kim Il Sung asked them to show him the way to Mihunzhen.

But they refused, saying that typhoid fever was rampant there.

Kim Il Sung said:

As typhoid is borne by man, it can also be controlled by man. Man can defeat epidemics. Epidemics cannot defeat man.

One of the soldiers countered, "What do you say? Can man defeat epidemics? No. These diseases don't discriminate between the weak and the strong. You know how strong company commander Choe Hyon is! But he's been bedridden with typhoid for weeks now in Mihunzhen."

Kim Il Sung was surprised:

What? Has that steel-like soldier contracted the disease? If so, all

the more reason for me to go and see him.

As soon as he arrived at the secret camp in Mihunzhen, Kim Il Sung immediately went to the dug-out which housed about 50 fever patients, including Choe Hyon.

Choe shouted in protest, "I say, Commander Kim. Don't come in for mercy's sake. You mustn't!"

He looked at Kim Il Sung with a haggard face, trying to crawl towards the door.

Seeing the latter approaching towards his bed, he hid himself under the blanket.

Kim Il Sung pushed his hand under the blanket and took the patient's hot hand.

Tears filled Choe's eyes and all other patients burst into tears.

Kim Il Sung's tender care was a great encouragement to the patients, and they recovered from the disease soon afterwards.

His warm feeling of comradeship–risking his own life for his comrades-in-arms–saved them from the jaws of death.

Bundles of Papers Burned to Ashes

In spring 1936 Kim Il Sung went to Mt Maan with a view to forming a new division of the KPRA.

He was surprised to see only a few soldiers and Kim Hong Bom, the head of the political department of the 1st Division, remaining at the camp, as the 2nd Regiment had moved to Jiaohe on an expedition.

Kim Il Sung asked the political officer:

You say that all other soldiers left and you, as well as some soldiers, remain here. What are you doing here?

The answer was "There are more than one hundred 'Minsaengdan' members in the Sampho secret camp. I am remaining here to watch them."

It was ridiculous that he was still talking about "Minsaengdan," almost one year after the meetings in Dahuangwai and Yaoyinggou, and all the revolutionaries in east Manchuria were well aware that the "purge" campaign was a serious blunder.

Kim Il Sung asked him if there was any evidence, and the latter showed bundles of papers–confessions, statements, records of interrogation, etc.

The papers were so numerous as to fill a room.

These papers, sealed with thumbs, recorded "serious crimes," which the political officer claimed nobody could dare deny.

Kim Il Sung went to the Sampho secret camp in order to have talks with the suspected members of "Minsaengdan."

He said to them:

I examined the papers which accuse you of involvement in the "Minsaengdan." But I don't believe that I can judge you by these papers. Speak frankly without fear.

There was no response from them.

He called some of them, asking whether it was true that they were "Minsaengdan" members.

Every one of them said that it was true.

Kim Il Sung grew uneasy, stepping outside and walking up and down the forest.

He made for the log-cabin again and called together all the suspected members of "Minsaengdan."

He said:

Comrades, raise your heads. I have not come here to accuse you of any crime or judge you. I am here to find comrades who will go with me to Mt Paektu to fight. But you comrades claim that you are all pro-Japanese traitors and reactionaries who cannot become my comrades-in-arms. I refuse to believe this. Tell me why. Have you borne your crosses for years merely for the Japanese imperialists? Have you endured the icy cold and snowstorms, eating and sleeping in the open in this desolate land of Manchuria to become a lapdog of the Japanese and kill off your fellow countrymen and comrades?

Tears brimming in their eyes, they cried out.

"No, I am not their dog. I am not a 'Minsaengdan' member!"

"No, nor am I."

Kim Il Sung instructed the political officer to fetch all the bundles of "Minsaengdan" papers and burn them.

The latter was surprised, his legs trembling, as he was aware that he might be accused of "connivance" and executed.

Kim Il Sung knew full well how dangerous his decision was, but he was resolute about doing what he had to do.

He announced that the more than one hundred "Minsaengdan" members were innocent and all of them belonged to the main force of the KPRA.

He set fire to the papers, which was a bold decision made by the young general in his twenties with matchless courage and pluck.

This was how a new division of the KPRA was born.

20 *Yuan*

In spring 1936, after forming a new division of the KPRA, Kim Il Sung went to see the Children's Corps members who were in the Maanshan secret camp.

Seeing him from a distance, all the children rushed out of a log cabin.

They ran towards Kim Il Sung, yet stopped halfway one by one.

Walking towards them with his arms stretched out, Kim Il Sung

came to an abrupt halt.

He stood for a while, gazing wonderingly at them.

Their faces were swollen because of hunger, and their burnt, torn and worn-out clothes were in tatters.

Trying to suppress his painful sorrow, he called:

Hey, boys and girls, raise your heads. You are not to blame for your worn-out clothing. Come quick.

He approached the children with open arms, and the children wept loudly, surrounding him.

He went into the cabin with the crying children. In the cold room he found several children huddled up in a corner without a blanket.

He felt their foreheads and studied their complexions, asking in detail about how they got ill.

Kim Hong Bom and the soldiers in the secret camp gave no reply. In fact, the national chauvinists and "Leftist" opportunists, who had cold-shouldered the children, were to blame for this.

Kim Il Sung thought that now the time had come to spend the 20 *yuan* his mother had given him before she passed away.

He said to himself, turning to his mother who lay buried alone on the cold slope of the Tuqidian valley:

Mother, four years have passed since I left you with this money. I have kept it until now to provide against future need, although I have gone through many crises. Now, however, I must spend it. I must provide clothing for children who have no kith and kin in the world.

He ordered the regimental political commissar to go with the money and buy cloth and make clothes for the children.

First Women's Company

While discussing the organization of a new division of the KPRA, Kim Il Sung brought up the subject of forming a women's company.

Some officers inclined their heads dubiously.

One of them said, "Can women fight alone? It seems impossible for them to fight successfully alone against hordes of ferocious Japanese. Things might be different, if the company and its platoons were commanded by men. …"

Days later, a composite unit of men and women came to Manjiang from the secret camp in Mihunzhen.

Although a composite unit, it contained only four or five men, with the remainder made up of women.

He called a soldier first, who was known to be the strongest, and told him to try lifting the knapsack and weapons which a woman soldier had brought. He asked the man how long he could march without a break. Four kilometres or so was the answer. Then he slung another woman's heavier knapsack and two taotongs on the man's shoulders and asked how long he could march. The man replied that he could go about two kilometres.

The second woman soldier told Kim Il Sung that she had marched all the way from Dapuchaihe to Manjiang without a rest. Everyone became wide-eyed, as the distance was nearly 40 kilometres.

Kim Il Sung heard a battle story from the women.

The small unit had run out of food supplies on its way to Headquarters. After suffering many hardships, they met a Chinese anti-Japanese unit and made a joint raid on a concentration village near Dapuchaihe.

The Chinese soldiers were armed with modern rifles, but when they were counterattacked by the enemy who had at first retreated, they ran away in all directions. The Korean women, however, fought the enemy bravely, although they were equipped with outmoded taotongs.

The Chinese men now joined in pursuit. The battle ended in victory for the anti-Japanese force.

After hearing this story, the officers with a misguided view of women withdrew their claim.

Soon, women soldiers came to Headquarters from hither and thither, and in April 1936, the birth of a women's company was formally announced in a forest near Manjiang.

As a combat unit of women, this company was the first of its kind in the development of the armed forces in Korea.

The birth of the company broke the convention of male supremacy, a social evil, which had been considered incurable for

thousands of years, and put women's mental and social positions on a par with those of men.

The Old Man "Tobacco Pipe" Admitted to the KPRA

Late in March 1936 some soldiers of a small unit operating in the Helong area arrived in a mountain village, where Kim Il Sung was staying. On seeing him, they reported that they had brought a strange old man with them.

According to them, the old man had followed them despite their repeated persuasions.

When they told him to go back home, he had merely replied, "You go yourselves, I'll go myself. Don't worry about me." He then had calmly followed the small unit at a certain distance.

Having heard the whole story, Kim Il Sung ordered them to go and bring the old man.

He was still chopping firewood in the yard of a peasant's house, when the old man arrived with a tobacco pipe held in his hand.

The old man, assuming that General Kim could not be so humble, frowned at the officer who guided him there.

When the officer said that he was now seeing Commander Kim Il Sung, the old man shook his head dubiously, "General Kim cannot be so young. How can the Commander chop firewood and

wear rough clothes like a farmhand?"

Kim Il Sung stopped working and smiled at the guest.

Holding the old man's hand in his, Kim Il Sung greeted him.

The guest, aware that he was now talking to the Commander, said, "I have heard many rumours about you. I have come to see what kind of man you are, as there are too many rumours about you."

This old man was Ri Tong Baek, later called "tobacco pipe."

After several days of candid talking with Ri in Mihunzhen, Kim Il Sung advised him to go back home.

Instead of replying, Ri took out a sheet of paper and handed it to Kim Il Sung. It was his application for admission written in a mixture of Korean and Chinese.

Kim Il Sung refused to accept it:

How on earth can you follow us at your age?

"Don't worry about that. Under the command of Ulji Mun Dok and Ri Sun Sin, there were a number of soldiers who were one and a half times older than me. So you have no reason to reject my request because of my age," said Ri.

Kim Il Sung said:

Who'll take care of your wife and children, who no doubt impatiently await you in the backwoods of Helong?

"According to one saying, you feel sorry if you cannot go into scheduled exile. Furthermore, you are now telling me to go back home, when I have already left it owing to my desire to devote

myself to the great cause of national salvation. General, you have embarked on the liberation struggle for the country. No one else could take care of your ailing mother and your younger brothers, could they?"

Kim Il Sung had no choice but to accept the old man's application. To commemorate his enlistment, he gave Ri the pistol he had treasured for two years.

With a light-hearted look on his face, Ri asked, "Do you know what held me by your side, General?"

Kim Il Sung looked curious, and Ri said, "In actual fact, first of all your ennobling cause. Secondly your patched trousers and the cry of all those suffering from fever in Mihunzhen."

He went on, "On the whole I decided to remain here, because I have discovered the true master of the Korean revolution, the genuine master and leader who shoulders all the responsibility for Korea's destiny. You keep clear of armchair arguments and empty theories and talks. For this merit alone, you managed to persuade a rural scholar like me."

Kim Il Sung smiled, asking if his decision was motivated by a third reason.

"Why not! Of course. Your creative and practical way of thinking and your firm belief in the victory of the revolution," said Ri.

These were the reasons why he wanted to join the KPRA, which he could not write down in detail in his application paper.

Rolling a Snowball

The birth of a new division added strength to the main force of the KPRA, and Kim Il Sung paid close concern to promoting the anti-Japanese national united front movement and making full preparations, both organizational and ideological, for party founding.

The establishment of a permanent united front organization and unification of wide sections of the anti-Japanese patriotic forces constituted urgent tasks, which brooked no further delay.

Kim Il Sung put particular stress on preparing for the establishment of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland.

One day, during a break on the march, Kim Il Sung and Ri Tong Baek, the old man "tobacco pipe," exchanged their views on the national united front.

The latter expressed his opinion:

Although France, Spain and China could form a popular front by merging political parties and organizations thanks to parties like the Communist Party, the Socialist Party and the Nationalist Party as well as labour movement organizations, our country cannot do the same, because we have virtually no political parties or lawful organizations.

Kim Il Sung gave Ri two snowballs and told him to roll them into one. He himself rolled a small snowball on the snow and made

it as large as the snowball the old man had merged.

Then he said to Ri:

Well now, look. You made one ball by merging two political parties, and I have made one larger than yours by rolling a small ball. Will you claim even now that the organization of a united front is only possible when there are political parties?

Gazing fixedly at the snowball in Kim Il Sung's hand, Ri muttered to himself, "Really that is a profound principle. However,

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Donggang Meeting

This was a meeting of the military and political cadres of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, in which detailed plans were drawn up for the implementation of the strategic policies set forth at the Nanhutou meeting and the formation of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland was announced.

Held in Donggang, Fusong County, from May 1 to 15 in 1936, the meeting was presided over by Kim Il Sung.

In his report, titled, *Let Us Further Expand and Develop the Anti-Japanese National United Front Movement and Take the Korean Revolution as a Whole to a New Upsurge*, Kim Il Sung clarified the character of the ARF and the significance of its formation, explained the main content of the Programme of the ARF and advanced tasks to be tackled in uniting the entire nation into a single political force under the banner of national liberation.

Made public at this meeting were the Ten-Point Programme, Inaugural Declaration and Rules of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland, all authored by Kim Il Sung.

On May 5 Kim Il Sung declared the formation of the ARF, the first anti-Japanese national united front organization in Korea.

a snowball is a snowball and a political party is a political party, isn't it?"

Kim Il Sung said:

To our great surprise, however, many natural phenomena we have experienced conform to social phenomena, as far as principles are concerned.

He continued to tell Ri in detail about the experience accumulated by new-generation young communists in rallying anti-Japanese patriotic forces from all areas of society.

He went on:

We can easily form a united front, if we are backed by the masses and leadership nucleus. I believed in this case that we should rally people, be they ten or a hundred, using the identity of their purposes and aspirations as the criterion. With this aim in mind, we have been promoting the united front movement for a long time now.

Beating his nape, Ri said, "Dogma really is a problem," and laughed loudly.

Offering Clean Water at a Military Camp

Chondoism was Korea's unique national religion. It was a patriotic and progressive religion in its basic tenets and ideals.

Chondoist faith had a positive aspect of progressive religion, advocating respect to man and human equality, so Kim Il Sung

thought that there was a possibility for it to join hands with the KPRA ideologically and practically for the united front.

In early winter 1936 Kim Il Sung had talks with Tojong Pak In Jin, the leader of the Chondoists in South Hamgyong Province, in the secret camp of Headquarters.

He said to the religionist:

It is a great inspiration and pleasure that we have people like you, who are true to your patriotic principles in this present murky world.

"Your praise is too much for me. I'm not worthy of your compliments," said Tojong Pak. He apologized from the bottom of his heart for the fact that he had for a brief moment been fooled by the propaganda of the Japanese aggressors under the false impression that the KPRA was a "gang of bandits."

Kim Il Sung said:

We can emerge victorious, only when we're united in the struggle, but we will be vulnerable in all actions, if we are disunited and torn apart by factions. This is a bitter lesson history has taught us. I hope that the conscientious Chondoists will turn out in this great anti-Japanese war and join the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland.

During an evening conversation with Tojong Pak Kim Il Sung noticed it was close to 21:00. It suddenly occurred to him that it was the time for the Chondoist to offer clean water. He came outdoors with his orderly and told him to fetch a bowl of fresh water.

He explained that Chondoists offered clean water at 21:00 in the evening.

Chongsu means the provision of a brass bowl of clean water, which is a commandment never to be violated even for a day in the world of Chondoism. Clean water symbolizes the foundation of heaven and earth and represents the pledge of believers to never forget the benevolence of the universe. Choe Je U, the founder of Chondoism, made the offer of clean water during the last moment before his beheading. Consequently, the Chondoist followers set as a traditional rule and convention the provision of clean water, symbol of the sacred blood of its founder.

Going back into the room, Kim Il Sung told Tojong Pak that it was time for the offering of clean water.

He said:

Forgive me for bringing holy water in an enamel bowl instead of a brass bowl. Tojong, please offer clean water, as long as you don't mind that it isn't in a brass bowl.

Tojong Pak glanced at Kim Il Sung, greatly surprised.

"General, how can I offer clean water at your military camp, knowing that you do not believe in Chondoism?"

Kim Il Sung said:

At the time of the Tonghak rebellion, its adherents were said to have chanted their prayers before a bowl of clean water every day even on the battlefield. Respected Tojong, are you going to violate this rule which you have observed for decades, on account of your

visit to our camp? Please feel free and relaxed in your prayers.

Tojong Pak humbly declined this request.

Pointing out that respect of human equality and freedom of religion was clearly laid down in the Ten-Point Programme of the ARF, Kim Il Sung said that if Tojong, who was uncommonly pious, neglected the daily divine routine even once out of deference to an unbeliever, he would regret this act. In this way he repeatedly beseeched the Chondoist to offer clean water.

After offering clean water in the room, Tojong Pak said, "I made the offering with the water drunk by the ancestors of our country. I will never forget this evening. I am deeply moved."

Birthday Dinner for a Landlord

Late in August 1936, a small unit of the KPRA, which had been on a mission, brought deep in the night several persons, who were said to be pro-Japanese landlords, including an old man apparently on the wrong side of seventy. This old man's name was Kim Jong Bu.

When the Independence Army fought in high spirits in Changbai, Kim Jong Bu was the head of the Southern Department of the War Fund-Raising Association. He provided the Independence Army with clothing, food and other supplies at the expense of his own family property. Under his sponsorship a village school

for conventional education was established in Diyangxi. Later, he transformed the village school into a four-year course modern primary school, and then developed it into a six-year course private school, with an enrolment of more than 150 pupils. The expenses for the management of the school and the payment for its teachers were provided by him. The school provided national education to inculcate in the pupils the idea of independence and sovereignty, as well as love for the country and nation.

His tenants paid their rents on a voluntary basis, and they borrowed food from him occasionally but never returned it with interest.

The people of Diyangxi unanimously praised Kim Jong Bu, calling him "our father," "our head of department," or "our school founder." The villagers put up a monument in his honour in front of his house.

While talking with Kim Jong Bu, Kim Il Sung said:

I am awfully sorry to have made you, old men, walk in the dreary night. We make this kind of mistake, although not often, while travelling around places, which are not familiar to us. I believe that you are magnanimous enough to forgive my comrades for their possible rudeness.

"Well, which army is this? You don't look like bandits or the erstwhile Independence Army in appearance," said Kim Jong Bu, watching Kim Il Sung closely with curiosity.

Kim Il Sung said:

We are the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, fighting for Korea's independence.

"The People's Revolutionary Army! Do you mean General Kim Il Sung's army, which routed the Japanese in Fusong?"

Kim Jong Bu apologized for failing to recognize Kim Il Sung sooner.

Kim Il Sung went on:

While ignorant of you, my comrades have taken you here. So I explained to them that you are a patriotic landlord, rather than a pro-Japanese or reactionary landlord. Although we have been unable to erect a monument in your honour as the people of Diyangxi did, we will not commit such a foolish mistake as to take a patriot for a pro-Japanese landlord. You should be proud of the devoted service you have rendered to the independence movement.

Kim Jong Bu was deeply moved by these words, saying, "Since you say that I am a patriotic landlord, I would have nothing to regret, even if I died now."

The following day when Kim Il Sung told him to return home, Kim Jong Bu refused and begged Kim Il Sung not to deprive him of his best opportunity to help the independence of the country. He spent lunar New Year's Day that year in the secret camp.

One day, a special dinner was prepared in the camp.

Kim Il Sung filled a cup of wine to the brim and offered it to the old man, saying:

Mr Kim, I am sorry to have kept you in the mountain in this

winter cold on your birthday. Please accept this humble birthday dinner as a token of our best wishes.

Kim Jong Bu said, "I am so sorry to see you guerrillas endure all these hardships eating maize porridge, in order to win back the lost country, that I can hardly eat three hot meals every day. To give a birthday party in honour of an old man like me in the depths of mountain! General, I will never forget your kindness even in my grave."

Kim Il Sung told him that he wished him a long life until the country won independence.

Kim Jong Bu said, "To be candid, I did not look upon the communists with a gracious eye. But, General, your communism is quite different. You discriminate between pro-Japanese and anti-Japanese landlords and attack only pro-Japanese. Who could dislike such communism? I don't think I can live many more years. I am determined to back up the People's Revolutionary Army, even if I die."

Later, he gave up the idea of amassing wealth, something vital to a landowner or capitalist, and offered up the source of wealth to the KPRA.

An Ox Returned to Its Owner

In autumn 1936 the main force of the KPRA was staying in Diyangxi, Shijiudaogou of Changbai County.

One day two soldiers, who had been to gather some dried vegetable leaves, came back with an ox.

They said that while gleaning harvested fields, they had encountered some peasants from Yaoshuidong, who had been returning from the market. The ox had been sent by the peasants, upon hearing that the guerrillas were taking only soup made of dried vegetable leaves for their meals.

At first the two men had refused to take the ox. However, they said that they had been compelled to bring it, because the peasants had entreated them to accept their sincerity and forced the reins into their hands.

After hearing the story, Kim Il Sung came to see the ox.

He stroked the back of the fat ox and touched the neatly made nose ring, brass bell and coins on the bridle.

Looking carefully at them for a good while, he said that the ox should be returned to its owner.

The men who had brought the ox looked up at him dumbfounded. It must have seemed quite an unexpected order for such men, who had been appeasing their hunger for several days.

Kim Il Sung explained:

Why are we going to return this ox to its owner? Precisely, because it is the precious property of the peasant, its owner. Look how dearly he has held his ox and loved it! This brass bell has probably been kept with much care for several generations in his family. Most likely the grandma of the family brought the coins in the strings of her purse attached to her skirt, when she was married and treasured them all her life. Our mothers express their affection for oxen in such a way.

As his men felt guilty, Kim Il Sung went on:

We should also return the ox, because the farming of the peasants in Yaoshuidong is largely dependent on it. What will happen there, if we slay the ox because it is the sincerity of the people, without taking this into consideration? The owner of the ox and his neighbours, who have become indebted to the ox, will have to do the work of the ox from tomorrow onwards. Almost all of you are the sons of poor peasants, so think of your parents, who are toiling away.

Now the soldiers asked Kim Il Sung to punish them for violating the discipline they should observe in their relations with the people, saying that they did not keep in mind his instruction that they should love the people.

They went back to Yaoshuidong to return the ox.

Jingan Army Unit Cut into Pieces

In mid-February 1937, when his unit arrived at a village near Yaofangzi, Kim Il Sung ordered it to billet there and sent out a scout party to Taoquanli.

The scout party learned that a Jingan army unit was to arrive in Taoquanli in the evening.

Taoquanli was some 12 kilometres away from Yaofangzi, and in order to reach Taoquanli, the unit had to pass through a long lane between birch trees, brambles, reeds taller than a man, and entanglements of purple eulalia.

Kim Il Sung decided to make the enemy dog-tired via enticement by a small unit and annihilate them to the last man via the ambush of a large force.

He organized a decoy party composed of two platoons and ordered it to be deployed halfway up a plateau nearby, and instructed that the 7th and 8th regiments, the pillars of the main force, should advance further.

The decoy party hid itself near the road leading to Taoquanli.

When the enemy's marching column appeared, the decoy party opened surprise fire at the head of column and then quickly ran away to the plateau, full of thornbush where other guerrillas were lying in ambush. The duped enemy chased them rashly.

Owing to the thornbush, the enemy force was naturally cut into pieces. The men in ambush unleashed a shower of bullets here and there on the enemy's column.

Hundreds of the enemy were smashed by this tactic of piecemeal annihilation.

When dusk began to set, the enemy fled to Taoquanli, leaving a large number of those killed and wounded in the battlefield.

Consequently, the enemy left the village almost at midnight. By that time the KPRA had already prepared the ambush on both sides of the road and had been awaiting them for almost half an hour.

The enemy soldiers were walking slowly, feeling fatigue after a day-long march, followed by the languor of eating too much for supper.

When they entered the ambush range, Kim Il Sung fired a signal shot.

In this ambush the KPRA completely annihilated the Jingan army unit.

5. Overcoming Trials

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Hundreds of Miles from Xiaotanghe at One Go

It happened in the spring of 1937 when the main force of the KPRA set out on an expedition to Fusong.

The unit left Yangmudingzi and marched towards Donggang, but at Xiaotanghe it was surrounded by thousands of enemy troops in double and treble rings. At night the enemy's campfires could be seen all around.

The "punitive" commander told the company of reporters that his units encountered Kim Il Sung's communist army, that Kim Il Sung was on this side of thirty, and that his army was the strongest force in Dongbiandao.

He bragged, however, that they were now caught like "rats in a trap."

"Comrade Commander, it seems there is no escape. What about preparing to fight the enemy to the death?" said the commander of the 7th Regiment in a sombre tone.

Kim Il Sung watched the campfires in the mountains, pondering on how to break through the encirclement.

He soon ordered his unit to move to the inhabited area and, from there, proceed towards Donggang along the highroad.

He said to the officers with confidence:

The enemy has massed thousands of troops here. This implies that the villages and highways in this area are now all devoid of enemy forces. He is concentrating so hard on this forest that he won't even imagine that we might escape along the highway. The highway is the gap in the enemy's ranks. We must move quickly to the Donggang secret camp through this gap.

As he had predicted, the highway was completely deserted and there was no enemy in the nearby villages. His unit moved as swiftly as an express train through the villages towards the forests of Donggang.

Expedition to Fusong

This was an expedition which the main force of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, under the command of Kim Il Sung, made to Fusong in March 1937.

The expedition had two objectives: One was to make the enemy's border defence weakened by luring him to leave the Changbai area and chase the KPRA; the other was to give the recruits of the KPRA adequate political, military and moral training to meet the requirements of the prevailing situation and in keeping with the mission of the KPRA.

Going Back to Toudaoling

Early in May 1937, after finishing the one-month-long intensive military and political training in the Donggang secret camp, the main force of the KPRA embarked on a march towards the homeland.

As they were marching towards their homeland, all the guerrillas were overjoyed.

They soon realized that they were not headed for the homeland. To their surprise, they were returning to where they had fought fierce battles the previous winter.

They wondered why their Commander changed course.

Three days after their departure, they reached Toudaoling.

Kim Il Sung ordered a halt and asked one of his men whether Choe Kum San had been buried around there.

The guerrillas could now understand why he had decided to return to this place.

Kim Il Sung's orderly, Choe Kum San, fell in action in March 1937 when the main force of the KPRA was on the expedition to Fusong.

As the unit was bivouacking in Toudaoling, the enemy pounced on it. Seeing that Kim Il Sung was bringing up the rear of the withdrawing unit, the orderly shielded him death-defyingly. His uniform was drenched with blood.

The earth's crust at Toudaoling was frozen so hard that it even defied an axe and a bayonet. The guerrillas had to bury Choe Kum San in the snow.

Recalling the battle, Kim Il Sung changed him into a new uniform, gave him his final burial in a sunny spot and had several shrubs of azalea planted in front of his grave.

Gazing at the grave, he said to himself:

Good-bye, Kum San! We are going to Mt Paektu again. In the coming summer, we will advance into the homeland, come what may, as you wished. There we will avenge your death upon the enemy, a hundred, even a thousand times.

Then he ordered his unit to march towards the homeland.

Helping a Farmhand Find a Wife

Towards the end of May 1937, on its return to Changbai from the expedition to Fusong, Kim Il Sung's unit began making preparations in Jichengcun for the advance into the homeland.

Jichengcun was a rural village where there were not many households.

While staying there, Kim Il Sung met a farmhand named Kim Wol Yong.

Since he had worked for hire from childhood, moving from place to place, he was still a lonely bachelor. Although he was over thirty, nobody wanted to give him daughter.

His hands were as stiff as a metal hook, his back was bent like a bow, and his clothes were unspeakable.

Before leaving the village, Kim Il Sung said to old man Jang, the host of whose house he stayed in:

Old man, I have something difficult to ask of you. The thought of Kim Wol Yong kept me awake last night. What about you village elders helping him to find a good wife and making arrangements for his wedding?

Jang said, "General, I am sorry to have worried you over such a thing. We will do our best to help him find a wife and get him married. So please don't worry."

The old men of the village kept their promise. Thanks to the good offices of the elders, Kim Wol Yong married a good woman and made a home.

Upon being informed of this, Kim Il Sung told a logistics officer to choose the best fabrics and foodstuffs from the captured goods and send them on to Jichengcun.

The logistics officer asked, beyond Kim Il Sung's expectation, why they should send the goods for the wedding ceremony.

Kim Il Sung asked why he did not like the idea.

The logistics officer answered, "In fact, there is something in my mind that holds me back from sending the goods. Think of how many of our fallen comrades had to be satisfied with merely a bowlful of rice at their wedding party, the most jubilant moment of their life!"

Kim Il Sung now understood his feelings, saying:

The thought of it pains me, too. But there is no reason why the people should follow our footsteps in getting satisfied with a bowl of rice as a makeshift for a wedding party, is there? Why should we not arrange a splendid wedding party for one man, Kim Wol Yong–we, Korea's young men who have taken up arms to revitalize our nation?

That day the logistics officer made a bundle of the wedding presents and went to the village with it.

"General, let us prepare wedding presents for all the young people in West Jiandao," said he, upon returning from the village.

The news of the hired farmhand's success in marriage through the guerrillas' agency and the wedding presents they had made spread far and wide. Since then, the people placed much greater confidence in the KPRA.

Reasons Behind the Attack on Pochonbo

One May day in 1937 Kim Il Sung was informed that the 4th Division, which was active in the Musan area, was being surrounded by the enemy's "punitive" forces.

At this critical juncture he called a meeting of the military and political officers of the main force of the KPRA.

He said:

We have to advance into the homeland at any cost, hence we cannot change or cancel this plan of operation. At the same time, we must save Choe Hyon's unit quickly. It is inconceivable that we abandon our revolutionary comrades in the jaws of death because the advance into the homeland is important. There is only one way out. We must strike at one specific point in the homeland, the point that will enable us to attain both goals at once.

An officer asked Kim Il Sung on behalf of everyone which place he had in mind.

When Kim Il Sung pinpointed Pochonbo on the map, all the participants were dumbfounded.

Another officer asked whether they could attain the goals if they attacked the small village.

Kim Il Sung explained:

If we attack Pochonbo, the enemy concentrated on the Pegae Hill area will find itself in a danger of being surrounded by both our main forces and Choe Hyon's unit. They will then be forced to abandon their plan of encirclement and pursuit and will withdraw from the line they have reached. Moreover, an attack on Pochonbo will have as strong an impact on the homeland as an attack on Hyesan. Therefore, our aim of advancing into the homeland will also be achieved.

All the officers agreed to carry out this operations plan to the letter.

Flames of Pochonbo

On June 4, 1937, Kim Il Sung's unit descended Konjang Hill and approached the town of Pochonbo. It was some minutes past 21:00, when the guerrillas reached a poplar tree by the Karim River, which stood at the edge of the town.

Silence reigned in the town, dim lights coming through the windows of the houses.

At 22:00 sharp, checking his watch, Kim Il Sung raised his pistol high and pulled the trigger.

Immediately, there was a volley of machine-gun fire somewhere near the command post, followed by a deafening barrage of pistol and rifle firing. The town seemed to be shaken to its very foundations.

Soon, the firing subsided and flames began to go up here and there.

People began to gather on the street in front of the sub-county administrative office. When they first heard the gunshots, they kept indoors, but later, seeing the flames rising at the enemy's administrative centres, they came pouring out. They read the leaflets and appeals spread by the publicity workers, and shouted "General Kim Il Sung has come!" and "Long live General Kim Il Sung!"

Kim Il Sung waved back at the cheering crowd, sending his

warm greetings to his fellow people.

Raising his hand high, he began to speak:

Brothers and sisters, look at the flames over there. Those raging flames show that the enemy is doomed. Those flames show the whole world that our nation is not dead but alive, and that if we fight against the Japanese imperialist plunderers we can win.

He called upon all the patriotic forces to achieve solid unity and turn out in the sacred war to defeat the Japanese imperialists and accomplish the cause of national liberation.

People continued shouting hurrah amid the blazing flames.

Invincible Army

As dawn broke on the day after the battle of Pochonbo, Kim Il Sung's unit climbed Mt Kouyushui.

The enemy's border guards must have got flurried under issued emergency mobilization orders, and Kim Il Sung had a hunch that a battle would have to be fought on that mountain. It was a rocky, steep mountain with a gradient of 60 degrees.

As the unit reached the summit of the mountain, Kim Il Sung ordered his men to dig trenches and build several rock piles.

When the day was breaking, there came a signal that the enemy was coming.

When the enemy soldiers came near his men's trenches,

Kim Il Sung gave the order to fire. The rifles and machine-guns went into action.

Kim Il Sung also took up a rifle and started shooting.

The enemy took cover behind rocks, firing back.

Kim Il Sung ordered a rockslide, and his men began to roll down the stones they had gathered. Here and there were seen corpses, many enemy soldiers crushed by rocks and still many others shot to death by machine-guns. Only a few survivors fled.

The civilians who had followed the KPRA from Pochonbo carrying booty witnessed the entire battle and were greatly impressed by its fighting power.

They reaffirmed the combat efficiency of the KPRA, saying that although the Japanese army boasted of being "invincible," it was not the Japanese army that was invincible, but the KPRA commanded by General Kim Il Sung.

A Joint Celebration Held on the Diyangxi Plateau

In June 1937, in Diyangxi, Shijiudaogou, Changbai County, Kim Il Sung had an emotional reunion with Choe Hyon's unit, which had returned safely by breaking through an encirclement in the Musan area.

The day the guerrillas arrived at Diyangxi, the head of Shijiudaogou called on Kim Il Sung. He said that his villagers were preparing some food, though frugal, and wanted to invite the guerrillas for a meal to celebrate the victories in Pochonbo and on Mt Kouyushui.

Kim Il Sung advised him not to prepare the food.

The head of Shijiudaogou said, "This is not my personal wish, General. It is the unanimous desire of the people of Shijiudaogou. Please don't decline our request. If I return with your refusal, even the women there will call me good-for-nothing and throw stones at me. I can endure that, but what can I do if the entire village sheds tears?"

Kim Il Sung said:

Since things have come to this pass, it would be good for the guerrillas and the people to get together and enjoy the day to their heart's content, rather than sharing food before our departure. It would be a good idea to hold a grand celebration in broad daylight

out on the Diyangxi plateau as a joint celebration between the army and the people. Let them encourage each other and share their friendship. Let's have some entertainment and an athletic meet so that they can enjoy the day and feel free from worldly worries.

So, in the middle of the month, the joint celebration was held on the Diyangxi plateau.

The guerrillas and the people mixed freely.

Kim Il Sung, on behalf of the KPRA, made a speech, titled, *Let Us Accelerate the Cause of National Liberation through the United Efforts of the Army and People*.

It was followed by some speeches made by the representatives of revolutionary organizations, in which they congratulated the KPRA on the successes it had achieved in its operations in the homeland.

The guerrillas and civilians had a pleasant time, singing and dancing on the plateau. This joint celebration was a pinnacle in the anti-Japanese revolution, which had managed to traverse the thorny path of history precisely because the guerrillas were loved by the people and the people were protected by the guerrillas.

"Bumper Crop of Pumpkins" in Jiansanfeng

In order to boost the morale of the guerrillas and civilians and show the enemy the stamina of the KPRA once again, Kim Il Sung planned to assault an internment village in Bapandao, Changbai County.

In the internment village, near Jiansanfeng, were stationed approximately 300 "punitive" troops of the puppet Manchukuo army.

Late in June 1937 the main force of the KPRA arrived in Jiansanfeng.

Kim Il Sung got a message from an underground organization that a large unit of the Japanese army had suddenly arrived in Hyesan, moved in the direction of Sinpha and then crossed the Amnok River.

He ordered his unit to halt its march towards Bapandao and chose a battlefield.

Jiansanfeng was most suitable for a battlefield.

The following morning the enemy launched their attack on Jiansanfeng. From dawn on it drizzled and a mist arose. The first signal shot rang out from the sentry post on the mountain ridge occupied by Choe Hyon's unit.

Choe Hyon went to the forward edge with one company, fearing

that the outpost might be surrounded by the enemy. The enemy soon encircled Choe Hyon's company.

Kim Il Sung told Ri Tong Hak to take his Guard Company with him and rescue Choe Hyon's company as soon as possible.

The Japanese attacked hard with the puppet Manchukuo troops placed in front of them as a shield, but Choe Hyon's and Ri Tong Hak's companies hit hard at the enemy in cooperation from within and without. After reversing the situation, the KPRA hit hard at the enemy all day long, driving them into the valley time and again.

The enemy came at the guerrillas in continuous waves, treading on the dead bodies of their companions.

With ten machine-guns the guerrillas set up a barrage of fire in front, but the enemy continued to swarm up.

They continued attack all day long, so the guerrillas had to fight a really tough fight.

In some places the enemy broke into the guerrillas' positions and the latter had to engage in close combat. To make matters worse, it kept raining. The battlefield presented an appalling sight.

While fighting, the women guerrillas sang the song *Arirang*, which resounded across the fighting ranks.

The singing boosted the morale of the guerrillas and stroke terror into the enemy.

The enemy did not suspend attack in the heavy rain until the evening, although they suffered many casualties. Kim Il Sung sent messengers to the small unit, which was on its way back from

reconnaissance in the Bapandao area, and to a food-procurement team, telling them to strike the enemy from behind.

The enemy soldiers were now threatened with attack from both front and rear; in addition, dusk was falling, and 200 or so survivors fled from the battlefield.

The battle ended in victory for the KPRA.

The day after the battle the enemy carried away the dead bodies of their soldiers, requisitioning stretchers, carts and lorries from Hyesan, Sinpha and villages near Jiansanfeng.

There were so many casualties that heads were cut off from the dead bodies, packed in sacks and wooden boxes and carried on carts to the place where lorries were waiting.

Peasants in the Jiansanfeng area were to have been nearly smothered for several days by the smoke and smell of burning corpses.

A peasant, feigning ignorance, asked a Japanese soldier disposing of corpses, "Sir, what do you carry on the cart?"

"It is *kabocha*." *Kabocha* means pumpkin.

"You have a bumper crop of pumpkins. It will serve for good soup stock. You will have a plenty of it."

The Boys Who Took Up Arms

The news that in the summer of 1937 the main force of the KPRA, commanded by Kim Il Sung, advanced towards the Mt Paektu area and won one battle after another, spread far and wide.

Upon hearing the news, not only young people in their twenties or thirties but also teenagers were eager to join the KPRA.

One day, while recounting how work with applicants was in progress, the political commissar of the 7th Regiment said to Kim Il Sung:

"There is a problem. About 20 kids, each shorter than a rifle, have been plaguing me with requests to join and I don't know what to do with them. I told them to come back when they are a little bigger, but they do not listen to me. They said they would not go back without seeing you. They are as obstinate as mules."

Kim Il Sung went to the boys. He greeted them, stroking their heads and patting them on the back, and then had a chat with them.

All the boys had suffered indescribable hardship, most of them having lost parents, brothers or sisters and witnessed horrible scenes of their family members being killed in the enemy's "punitive" operations.

Kim Il Sung said to them:

I think it highly praiseworthy that you should be so determined to

take up arms to avenge the enemy for the murder of your families. This is a manifestation of the love you have for your country. But it is very difficult for us to accept you as soldiers of the revolutionary army, because you are still so young. You have no idea what incredible hardships your brothers and sisters of the guerrilla army have to undergo. In the height of winter, the revolutionary army has to sleep on a carpet of snow in the mountains. Sometimes they have to march in the rain for days on end. When provisions run out, they have to ease their hunger with grass roots or tree bark steeped in water, or with just plain water. This is the life of the revolutionary army. It seems to me you could not stand such a tough life. What do you say you return home now and wait to grow a bit older before you become a soldier?

All the boys rose to their feet like bouncing balls.

The boys carried on as before, asking to join the guerrilla army and insisting that they were prepared to go through whatever hardships were necessary, that they would sleep in the snow, fight as the adults did and so on.

The following day Kim Il Sung read the written pledges from the boys, and called together the officers above the level of company political instructor at Headquarters to officially announce that a children's company was formed with Children's Corps members from Maanshan and those who had come from West Jiandao.

This was how the children's company was born, a combat unit without parallel in the world.

Letter for a New Recruit

The following happened when the main force of the KPRA was doing intensive military and political training for four months, from the end of November 1937, in Matanggou, Mengjiang County.

It was quite long after the winter training began, and there was a new recruit in the 7th Regiment, who hated studying.

Whenever he was advised by his comrades to study harder, instead of listening to them, he used to argue that General Hong Pom Do, an illiterate like him, had been a good commander in the Independence Army–where he had picked up that story, God only knows–and that it was nonsense to say that an illiterate could not work for the revolution.

Upon being told about this, Kim Il Sung wrote a note and told his orderly to deliver it to the recruit. He also got the orderly to warn everyone in the different companies not to read the note to the recruit.

Receiving the note, the recruit was embarrassed.

Without a doubt, it was a serious case for a rank-and-filer not to be able to understand in a message what his Commander wanted. The man went around calling on his friends and asking them to read the note for him, but the latter made one excuse or another for refusing his request.

As a last resort, he came to see Kim Il Sung and begged him to tell him what he had said in the note.

Kim Il Sung read it out. The note said that the recruit was to carry out an urgent order by a certain hour and report the result to Headquarters. But he came with the message far too late to report. Now he hung his head, sweat pouring down his face.

Kim Il Sung said to the man:

There, you see! You were unable to carry out the Commander's order because you could not read. Suppose that you receive such a written order from me when you are working behind enemy lines. What will happen then? Studying is the primary task for a revolutionary. You should learn hard anytime and anywhere.

A Cup of Parched Rice Flour

The Arduous March, which began in the winter of 1938, was beset with difficulties and trials.

The Japanese "punitive" troops were in hot pursuit, and the weather was such that a birch tree froze and cracked up in the severe cold. Hunger was virtually unbearable for the guerrillas. Almost every day they fought fierce battles, cleaving their way through waist-deep snow in the forests.

One day an orderly of Kim Il Sung's took out a cup of parched rice flour, which he had hoarded in his knapsack as an emergency

ration, and gave it to Kim Il Sung.

Kim Il Sung then gave it to the youngest of his orderlies. The latter almost wept in gratitude as he saw the food. Kim Il Sung stroke the young man's hair and urged him to take it, saying that there was no need to worry about him.

After Kim Il Sung left, the young man gave the flour to his companion, who then kept it in his knapsack.

The march went on, and the orderlies discussed what they should do with the flour. Finally, they divided it into two portions and gave one portion to Kim Il Sung, keeping the remaining for his next meal.

Kim Il Sung told his orderlies to bring all their knapsacks and

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Arduous March

This was the trek made by the main force of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army from Nanpaizi, Mengjiang County, to Beidadingzi, Changbai County, from December 1938 to the end of March the following year.

It was only a five or six day walk from Nanpaizi to Beidadingzi, yet it took the guerrillas more than 100 days to cover the distance. This was because they had to fight the enemy every single step of the way. It was the enemy's non-stop hounding and encirclement, as well as the ceaseless battles, that made the march their worst trial yet.

The Arduous March was, in a nutshell, a constant, non-stop struggle against the worst of natural conditions, hunger, exhaustion, diseases and of course the brutal enemy.

show him how much they had in them. When they brought out the remaining flour, he put all of it on a newspaper and told them to sit in a circle.

He evenly distributed the flour using a slip of folded notepaper and gave one share to each orderly, saying that they would feel full if they supposed that they were taking a *mal* of it.

The orderlies declined to accept it at first, but, after his repeated urgings, diluted it in water. Yet, overwhelmed by his parental care, they could hardly drink it.

This episode illustrates how much Kim Il Sung cared for his men and what was the source of conviction for the guerrillas, who overcame the Arduous March and set up a historic milestone in the revolution.

Circling Around the Fuhoushui Tableland

It was early in February 1939 when Kim Il Sung's unit reached the Fuhoushui tableland in Changbai County.

A large enemy force was coming in its wake, but the unit had no way to throw them off. So, Kim Il Sung ordered his men to circle around the tableland.

During the second round, dusk fell in the forests and the distance between the guerrillas and the "punitive" troops was quite long. Then, another "punitive" force appeared, this time between the guerrillas and the chasing enemy. One round was a distance long enough to take a whole day, so the two enemy forces pursuing the guerrillas were out of mutual contact. It was a queer situation.

Kim Il Sung ordered each of his men to cut a tree as long as a sleigh pole while on the march. When they came full circle and reached the starting point, the guerrillas threw their trees across the tree stumps and slipped away to one side, using the poles as bridges over the stumps. When they went 500 metres or so into the forests, the trees were removed. After sentries were posted at the 300m point, the guerrillas had a break.

Soon afterwards, Kim Il Sung was informed that the chasing enemy passed without noticing where the guerrillas had gone, and that the enemy's two forces were still moving in a circle, one

pursuing the other.

It was pitch dark when the force following behind nearly caught up with the one leading the way.

The former grew impatient and opened fire at the latter, who in turn fired back, supposing that they were being attacked by the revolutionary army.

Having suffered this rather foolish loss on the Fuhoushui tableland, the enemy later said in despair that the KPRA was so slippery and it was totally impossible to catch it.

The Salt Incident

This incident took place late in March 1939–the last days of the Arduous March.

The lack of salt was the most unbearable of the difficulties the guerrillas faced in those days.

As they did not take in enough salt, their faces were swollen, and some of them were staggering around as if they were drunk.

Kim Il Sung tasked a new recruit with obtaining salt and attached an assistant to him.

The latter went to the enemy-held area and met his father in a mountain.

Regretting the fact that the revolutionary army should be unable to fight because of a salt deficiency, the old man promised that he would get it by any possible means. However, he found it not so easy to get salt after all.

The Manchukuo authorities and police forbade shops to sell salt beyond a prescribed limit. They also spied on shops now and then, investigating in secret the sale of the condiment.

The old man asked his neighbour to help him so as to obtain as much salt as possible, and the neighbour to a close acquaintance of his.

Unaware that his son was an enemy agent, the third old man

revealed the secret to the young man, a member of the Concordia Association. The enemy agent reported to his superior what he had heard from his father.

Informed that the KPRA was planning to obtain salt through the old men, the intelligence service of the Kwantung Army ordered the police to buy up all the salt from the shops in the area of Xigang and to replace it with salt transported by air in haste from Changchun. This salt had been poisoned. If one ate this particular salt, one did not die on the spot, but got a headache and became weak in the legs, and lost all combat efficiency.

The two old men, together with the above two guerrillas, left for the guerrilla bivouac.

The anti-Japanese war heroine Kim Jong Suk found out that the salt was poisoned. Kim Il Sung immediately ordered an officer to collect all the salt that had been distributed to the units.

However, some of the guerrillas had already eaten the salt.

The enemy intended to pounce on the guerrillas when they lost all their combat energy. The guerrillas fought the attacking enemy fiercely for two days.

After repulsing the enemy, the guerrillas went to the forest where the regiments had taken shelter. Everyone gradually recovered.

Some of the officers and men, furious, cold-shouldered the new recruit and his father, and even suggested executing the old men then and there.

Kim Il Sung severely criticized those who had suggested killing

the old men. While talking with the old men, he inquired in detail about how they had obtained the salt and asked about their family backgrounds. He then eased their minds, saying that he believed there was no reason to suspect them in the least.

He was afraid that the enraged enemy would commit an atrocity against the innocent old men, so he advised the new recruit's father that his family should move to another region. He discussed what needed to be done to take his family members away and gave him a generous sum of travel money.

Then he ordered an officer, who was familiar with things in West Jiandao, to take the old men to a safe place, not to their homes.

The officer took the two old men to a safe place first, and then took their families there in secret as well.

He also found out how it was that the salt had been poisoned in the first place.

The incident was a most trying experience the KPRA went through on its advance towards the homeland, and it made the enemy become keenly aware that it was unable to overwhelm the KPRA not only by force of arms but by any stratagem as well.

6. In the Area Northeast of Mt Paektu

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Advancing Again to the Homeland

Having undergone a winter-long arduous march, the main force of the KPRA advanced to the border area and arrived in Beidadingzi, Changbai County. In April 1939 Kim Il Sung called a meeting there, in which he put forward a policy of advancing again to the homeland.

At the dawn of one May day that year he ordered the unit to leave for the homeland.

A scouting party leading the way, the main force descended a mountain slope. Upon reaching a valley, there came the sound of a stream flowing gently down.

When the guerrillas went out of the forest, there appeared a barrage.

When they were nearing the river, they were ordered to cross it quietly.

A fallen tree was put across the stream, which looked like a log bridge. The guerrillas crossed the river, some by the natural bridge, some others by the barrage and still some others by the stepping-stones. Yet, there were few who knew that it was the Amnok River.

Kim Il Sung carried a young guerrilla on his back and walked across the river. Wading through the water, he asked him if he knew the name of the river. The latter said no, and Kim Il Sung said it

was the Amnok River.

The young boy asked Kim Il Sung to lower him into the water; he wanted to drench himself in the water of a Korean river.

The guerrillas' joy of setting foot on the soil of their native land was beyond description.

This was how the KPRA crossed the country's border, which the enemy claimed they had fortified like an impregnable barrier.

Azaleas were in full bloom by the river. The guerrillas brimmed with excitement, throwing their arms around the blossoming bushes, rubbing soil against their cheeks or rolling on the grasses.

Some of them stood gazing at the dense forests, looking as if they were shouting "Dear motherland, we have come back to you!"

"Inauguration" of the Kapsan-Musan Guard Road

In 1939 a large unit of the KPRA was on its way to the Musan area. Upon reaching Pegae Hill, it found itself being surrounded by the huge enemy forces that had been engaged in the searching operations. In order to make a success of the operations for their advance into the homeland, the guerrillas had to avoid conflict with the enemy for the time being. It was urgent to find a space in which the enemy forces were not present or which they were overlooking, or alternatively create such a space. Then what should they do to

realize this tactical intention?

Kim Il Sung organized a debate before giving his idea. His plan was to march in broad daylight along the new Kapsan-Musan guard road that was waiting for inauguration.

The officers were taken aback at this proposal.

This was natural, for his plan meant that a large force would march, not along a back lane, but a special road the enemy had built solely for the "punitive" operations against the KPRA.

Kim Il Sung explained:

Your own attitude proves that it is possible to march in broad daylight along the Kapsan-Musan guard road. When I suggested this plan you were stunned. The enemy, too, will never be able to imagine that a large KPRA unit would march along their specially-built guard road right in the middle of the day. This very fact makes it amply possible to carry out the march. Doing boldly what the enemy regards as impossible is a tactical guarantee of success in this move.

Kim Il Sung ordered his unit to march along the cleanly swept road to the Musan area.

When the enemy found out later that the KPRA had marched in the daytime along their guard road, they groaned in despair and called its bold move an "unprecedented oddity."

Koreans Running Towards the KPRA

Kim Il Sung foresaw that the enemy soldiers would naturally chase his unit, and made a decision to destroy them in the Taehongdan tableland, where the terrain features were in its favour.

In late May 1939 he, leading the 8th Regiment and the Guard Company, arrived in the tableland.

The guerrillas lay in ambush there, waiting for the 7th Regiment to return from a battle in Singaechok.

At last the 7th Regiment appeared, the guerrillas leading the way with trophies on their backs and some Korean and Japanese workers following behind.

Kim Il Sung saw hundreds of helmeted enemy soldiers trailing close behind them in secret.

As soon as the 7th Regiment passed by the area of the ambush, Kim Il Sung signalled the supply-service men of the 7th Regiment and the civilians to throw themselves on the ground, and then ordered his men to open fire.

The enemy troops were mowed down. Those who survived, however, resisted desperately.

The supply-service men of the 7th Regiment and the workers between the guerrillas and the enemy could not raise their heads under the blanket of fire.

At that time a somewhat peculiar thing happened on the battlefield. The workers were divided into two sides, with Koreans running towards the KPRA with the supplies on their backs and the Japanese crawling towards the Japanese troops, tossing away their loads. No Korean worker went over to the Japanese.

At this sight, Kim Il Sung keenly felt that the heart of the nation was beating as it should.

That day most of the enemy were killed.

This battle was the climax of the operation of advancing into the Musan area, and the news rapidly spread across the country.

After this battle, the Korean people turned a deaf ear to the enemy's propaganda and their trust in the KPRA became absolute.

Battle on the Shore of the Wukou River

In the spring of 1939, after putting forth a policy of conducting intensive military and political activities in the area northeast of Mt Paektu, Kim Il Sung led the main force of the KPRA to deal a hard blow at the enemy.

The following happened when his unit was coming closer to Bairiping.

In Bairiping there were more than 300 Jingan army soldiers.

The commander of the "punitive" force once said that it was the shame of the Japanese army that it had been suffering one defeat

after another, unable to deal with a guerrilla army, adding that he would wipe out this disgrace by annihilating the guerrilla army.

Kim Il Sung decided to annihilate this Jingan army unit, known as one of the most vicious units, because he believed that this would help overwhelming other "punitive" forces spiritually and instilling in the Korean people confidence in the certainty of victory.

The battleground he chose was a reed field not far from Bairiping. The field bordered the Wukou River, along one side of which was a motorway. On both sides of the river and the motorway were forests favourable for ambush.

The enemy appeared on the shore of the Wukou River in the late morning as the fog was beginning to lift. Several hundred heavily-armed troops were marching in high spirits with a number of machine-guns at the head. Just as the column entered his unit's ambush area, Kim Il Sung gave the order to fire.

Amid a deafening volley of gunfire enemy soldiers were mowed down. There were a small number of survivors, who surrendered to the KPRA.

The battle lasted for less than ten minutes.

The guerrillas captured many weapons and supplies, including four machine-guns. The commander of the "punitive" force fell beside the ditch, without fully drawing his sword from its sheath.

The guerrillas sneered at the dead body.

A Football Game in Yushidong

In the middle of June 1939, after successful battles in the areas along the Tuman River northeast of Mt Paektu, Kim Il Sung went to Yushidong, Helong County, with a view to transforming it on a revolutionary pattern.

True to his instructions, the guerrillas gave the villagers a detailed account of how they won one battle after another and explained the *Ten-Point Programme of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland* in plain language, in order to implant in their minds the validity of the revolutionary cause and confidence in sure victory.

On the other hand, he ordered his men to make good arrangements for spending an annual folk holiday with the villagers.

He instructed that on the holiday all the inhabitants living along the twelve-kilometre Yushidong valley, as well as the people of its neighbouring villages, be invited to the celebratory event.

To be included in the event were a swinging competition, a wrestling match, a joint entertainment for guerrillas and civilians, an artistic performance and even a football game.

The villages near the Tuman River were in a festive mood. Young people set up swings, wrestling site and goalposts.

It was almost unimaginable to even hold a football game while

enjoying the holiday in a calm and composed manner right in the heart of Helong at a time when the enemy was massing its "punitive" troops.

In Yushidong there is a tableland several hectares wide. The football game between the soldiers of the revolutionary army and the young villagers was great fun. The players of both teams did their best, kicking at the air now and then, or slipping and falling down on the grassland, drawing bursts of laughter from the onlookers.

The old folks said it was the first time since the village had come into being that the villagers of Yushidong were able to laugh and forget their worries.

Both the swinging competition and the wrestling match were enjoyable to watch, and the joint entertainment and artistic performance recorded a volley of encores, exceeding the scheduled time by far.

That day scores of young villagers in Yushidong volunteered to join the KPRA.

The battle in Bairiping and the football game in Yushidong became the main topic of conversation among the villagers.

Chinese Landlord Liu Tongshi

Liu Tongshi was a wealthy Chinese whom Kim Il Sung met in Helong County after the KPRA moved to the area northeast of Mt Paektu. His men brought the landlord, who was one of the richest in the county, to the secret camp to obtain material aid. His real name was Liu Yixian. He spoke Korean as fluently as his own mother tongue. So people called him Liu Tongshi. Liu Tongshi would often say that the Communist Party was his sworn enemy.

Kim Il Sung decided to talk one-on-one with Liu Tongshi.

The talk was dramatic.

The Chinese landlord asked Kim Il Sung, "Commander Kim, people call your army 'communist bandits.' Is it true that you are a communist?"

Kim Il Sung replied that calling his army "communist bandits" was a fabrication of the Japanese and it was true that he was a communist.

The landlord asked again, "Then, Commander Kim, what do you think of me, a man who has been against all communists up to now?"

Kim Il Sung said:

I feel extremely sorry that you are against communists.

However, we do not intend to punish you in the least, since you oppose communism because you do not understand it. Moreover, you love China and the Chinese people despite your opposition to communists. You do not want to see your country ruined, and you want to be a Chinese in your own country, even though you are a landlord and against communists. I attach great importance to this.

The Chinese thanked him, saying "Commander Kim, although there are many people and many mouths in Helong, you are the only person who has recognized that I am a patriot."

He confessed that he had been against communists because of narrow-mindedness, and asked what he should do to cooperate with them.

Kim Il Sung said:

It is not hard to understand what alliance with communists means. Opposing Manchukuo, resisting Japan and helping our revolutionary army all mean alliance with the communists. Alliance with communists and opposition to Japan is the most important patriotic deed for both Korean and Chinese landlords.

The following day, however, the landlord was strangely reticent. When Kim Il Sung asked him if there was anything wrong, the latter simply replied no. Greatly impressed by Kim Il Sung's generosity, the landlord was repenting of his past.

One day he asked an officer, "Why are you preparing gruel,

now that I have sent you dozens of sacks of rice? Of course, it's understandable if you cook gruel in order to spare your rice, but it's unreasonable to serve even the Commander with gruel because of the shortage of provisions."

Later, he, out of respect for Kim Il Sung, rendered active help, both material and moral, to the guerrillas.

A Guerrilla Who Blocked the Enemy's Gun Muzzle with His Chest

While the Soviet troops were engaged in heavy fighting in Khalkhin-Gol, Kim Il Sung advanced the slogan "Let us defend the Soviet Union with arms!" and ordered all the units of the KPRA to launch harassment operations behind the enemy lines.

According to his orders, in the summer of 1939 all the KPRA units fought numerous battles and made great contributions to checking the Japanese invasion of the Soviet Union.

Typical of these was the battle at Dashahe in August that year.

Dashahe was a fortress surrounded by a high earthen wall with a gun battery at each of its four corners.

Stationed in the fortress were police and members of the self-defence corps, as well as a company of the puppet Manchukuo army.

Just before daybreak, the guerrillas of the company which was

assigned with a mission of assaulting the fortress, edged closer to a vegetable field in front of the earthen wall and concealed themselves in the nearby bushes and hollows. They were waiting for a signal, which would indicate that the sentries at the gate were being relieved.

Unfortunately, a soldier of the puppet Manchukuo army went out to the vegetable field and found the guerrillas. The assault team immediately switched over to an attack, only to be stubbornly resisted by the enemy on the high wall and the gun battery. The guerrillas fired back, but they knew that this was not the way to end the battle quickly.

The guerrillas began to crawl towards the gun battery, in which a machine-gun was blazing. The company commander threw a grenade in the direction of the gun battery. The machine-gun stopped firing, and all the guerrillas dashed forward.

Some moments later, the machine-gun opened fire again. Another grenade was tossed, but missed the target.

At that moment, a guerrilla named Kim Jin shouted at his platoon leader, asking him to attack from the rear, and then moved forward at a quick crawl, carrying an explosive with him.

A stone's throw from the pillbox, Kim Jin gave it a moment's stare and jumped to his feet. He darted towards it and blocked the gun muzzle with his chest.

A loud explosion came, the machine-gun stopping, and the gun battery burst into flames.

Before breathing his last, Kim Jin asked the platoon leader and other comrades to support Commander Kim Il Sung faithfully and fight bravely till the day of national liberation.

Kim Il Sung deeply grieved over the death of the guerrilla.

Once a landlord's servant, Kim Jin joined the revolutionary army during its second expedition to north Manchuria.

The heroic guerrilla was laid to rest on a hill in Dashahe.

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Adopting New Strategy and Tactics

At the meeting of the military and political cadres of the KPRA held in Xiaohaerbaling, Dunhua County, from August 10 to 11, 1940, Kim Il Sung advanced a new strategic policy.

He put forth a strategic task of preserving and accumulating the forces of the KPRA and training its soldiers into competent political and military cadres in order to take the initiative in greeting the great event of national liberation.

In order to ensure the success of the strategic task, he put forward a new fighting policy on switching from large-unit operations to small-unit actions.

What was the most important in making preparations for taking the initiative in greeting the great event of national liberation was to preserve and accumulate the forces of the KPRA, the main buttress of the Korean revolution, and train its soldiers into competent political and military cadres.

Only by doing so was it possible to successfully fight the final battle with the Japanese imperialists, win a brilliant victory, and build a new Korea in the liberated homeland, with the forces of the KPRA as its backbone. Therefore, it presented itself as the most important strategic revolutionary task to preserve and accumulate the revolutionary forces through proactive actions while avoiding

losses in reckless battles.

In order to accomplish this strategic task successfully, the KPRA had to switch from large-unit operations to small-unit actions.

In order to be fully ready for the great event of national liberation, it was also necessary to prepare the people politically and ideologically, while, at the same time, preserving and accumulating the forces of the KPRA.

For the KPRA to stop its large-unit operations and switch over to small-unit actions was not only demanded by the development of the anti-Japanese national liberation struggle but also advised by the Comintern.

The new strategic policy of stopping large-unit operations and carrying out small-unit actions was the most reasonable policy to bring forward the final victory of the Korean revolution and develop the world revolution in light of the changed situation.

Decision to Move to the Soviet Far East

In mid-October 1940 Kim Il Sung met two messengers from the Comintern, who, braving great perils, came all the way to the temporary secret base in Chechangzi.

They told him that he was invited to a conference to be convened by the Comintern at Khabarovsk in December that year. They also conveyed to him the Comintern's suggestion that all the anti-Japanese armed forces in Manchuria should switch from large-unit operations to small-unit actions, and that they should move as soon as possible into the Soviet Far East area to establish bases there and regroup.

Kim Il Sung pondered deeply over this suggestion.

In those days the KPRA was beset with manifold difficulties.

First, obtaining food was a major bottleneck, since the Japanese imperialists were exercising strict control over the use of cereals and other strategic materials as part of a measure to destroy the KPRA.

Second, the KPRA was running short of officers as many of them had fallen in action.

Kim Il Sung burned the midnight oil for several days, thinking hard about the future of the anti-Japanese armed struggle.

He came to a conclusion that the Comintern's suggestion accorded with his intention to establish a secure base for the KPRA

and step up its small-unit and group actions by forming a strong allied front with the revolutionary armed forces of China and the Soviet Union.

Now that the Comintern's purpose of holding the conference was clear, and now that the other commanders of the Northeast Anti-Japanese Allied Army were said to have arrived, he decided to go to the conference.

However, some of his men were reluctant to go farther from their homeland and leave the familiar battlefield, even on a temporary basis. They asked Kim Il Sung if it wouldn't be better for him and a few other delegates to go there, since the Comintern had invited him to the important conference, leaving the other men behind to continue the fighting.

Kim Il Sung mulled over this proposal and said:

We are not going to the Far East region to give up the revolution or to live there for good. I think I must participate in the conference this time, although I did not do so the last time. Doing so may be beneficial to us. I am not sure how long the conference will last, so I intend to take you, comrades, with me. I must not leave you behind when the preparations for the winter are not satisfactory.

This was how Kim Il Sung, together with the soldiers under the direct command of Headquarters, left for the Far East region.

The march was a trying experience, yet it led up to a new dawn of the Korean revolution.

Pledge Made in the Backwoods of Mengshancun

With the Japanese "punitive" operations going full steam across Manchuria, there emerged turncoats and deserters among the revolutionary ranks.

After Headquarters of the KPRA moved to the backwoods of Mengshancun, owing to a man's betrayal, all the food supplies stored for the upcoming winter fell into the hands of the enemy.

At the news the guardsmen became uneasy about how to preserve the forces of the KPRA and ensure the safety of its Headquarters.

The grim reality showed that those devoid of conscience and moral obligation could not defend their faith, and that once they grew weak in their faith and will, they could not carry on the revolutionary struggle.

In a meeting of officers and soldiers, Kim Il Sung said:

The situation is growing more and more rigorous and arduous. We all believe that our revolution will triumph and that our country will become independent, but nobody knows when. We have fought for some ten years or more already, undergoing all sorts of hardships. But it is difficult to say definitely how many more years we shall have to endure such sufferings–five years, ten years or more? It is clear, however, that the ultimate victory will be ours.

After a pause he resumed:

Needless to say, our road ahead is beset with many difficulties. These difficulties may be much more serious–several times or scores of times–than those we have experienced so far. So any of you who are not confident about following us to the end in carrying out the revolution may go home. If any of you wants to go home, we will give him travel expenses and food rations. We will not take issue with him for giving up the revolution. It cannot be helped if he is too weak and lacking in confidence to remain in our ranks. Anyone who wants to go may go. But you must say goodbye to us.

Hearing this, one of the men said tearfully, "General, we won't regret it even if we die without seeing the day of the revolution's triumph. Dead or alive, we won't leave you, General."

Another said, "How long can a man live after all? We prefer fighting here to the death to betraying our comrades and going down the mountain to live in submission to the enemy. We'll share life and death with you, General!"

Listening to their pledges, Kim Il Sung embraced them.

The meeting held at Mengshancun reaffirmed the unbreakable unity between Kim Il Sung and his men, the steel-like unity of the leader and the masses.

Fifty Packets of Parched Meat

The following happened in the days of small-unit actions.

Kim Il Sung was informed that a man from O Paek Ryong's small unit, who had been dispatched on a mission of getting in contact with Headquarters, was killed on the way by the "punitive" troops.

Soon afterwards, he sent several messengers to find the whereabouts of the small unit. As no word was coming from them, his anxiety grew with each passing day.

The day came when Headquarters had to leave its bivouac. As everyone was busy making preparations for the march, Kim Il Sung ordered his men to bury some cereals and new winter clothes at the site of campfire.

The guerrillas could now understand how much he cared about the small unit that was still missing.

As they were going on the march, they suffered from a severe shortage of food. Having lived almost entirely on boiled-down herbs, all grew weak.

Fortunately, they caught a big deer.

Seeing his men relishing meat soup, Kim Il Sung was still concerned about O Paek Ryong's small unit.

He ordered his men to parch and powder the remaining meat,

divide it into 50 shares and pack every share in a packet made of paper.

After the packets of parched meat were prepared, he wrote on every one of them the name of each member of the small unit.

He then told his orderly that the packets should be kept with care and handed over to the small unit after its return.

Later, despite the shortage of food and the ferocity of battles, the soldiers took good care of the packets–the tokens of Kim Il Sung's parental care for his men.

Unusual Affection

In 1940, as cold winter set in, Kim Il Sung-led small unit was approaching an area bordering the Soviet Union.

The soldiers were somewhat tired from nearly a month of arduous march and fierce battles.

When ordered to billet, they built a bonfire and slept around it.

Kim Jong Suk, the anti-Japanese war heroine, took out Kim Il Sung's clothes from her knapsack and walked towards a brook nearby.

After washing the clothes, she came back and put up some tree branches around the bonfire to dry the clothes.

Some moments later there came an emergency call, signalling that the enemy was nearby.

It was close on daybreak and the soldiers made a long march against the biting cold.

When they were bivouacking, Kim Jong Suk went to the Headquarters tent and gave the clean clothes to Kim Il Sung.

After she returned, Kim Il Sung was told about how the clothes were dried; she had dried them against her own body during the march.

She had tried to do it unnoticed by others, but the other women soldiers' high praise for her deed reached Kim Il Sung's ears.

He immediately called her to Headquarters.

He was near tears when he saw her face so pale from the cold.

He said to her:

Comrade Jong Suk, I respect your devotion to me. I am always grateful to you for it. But why on earth did you do this? What if you catch a chill? If I bask in your self-sacrificing devotion, do you think I will feel at ease? Don't do it again.

After she returned, Kim Il Sung went out of the tent and took a long stroll in the snow.

He could not forget the look of Kim Jong Suk trying, biting her lips, not to reveal the chill she was feeling. He shed tears as he was reminded of his mother that had been laid to rest in an alien land.

8. For the Final Showdown with Japan

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First Meeting with Kim Chaek

Some days before the Khabarovsk conference, Kim Chaek came to Kim Il Sung's lodgings. He was the secretary of the North Manchuria Provincial Party Committee and a commanding officer of the 3rd Route Army of the Northeast Anti-Japanese Allied Army. He had a calm demeanour, and he was going bald even though he was not yet 40.

Kim Il Sung was very impressed by his composed behaviour.

He told the guest that he felt that he was an old friend in spite of the fact that it was their first meeting. Kim Chaek replied that he also felt that Kim Il Sung was not in the least a new acquaintance.

"Why did it take so long to meet Commander Kim?" Kim Chaek muttered to himself after they exchanged greetings.

"I have long looked forward to meeting you," he said. "Do you know how earnestly the Korean revolutionaries in north Manchuria wished to see you? We fought always looking up at Mt Paektu where your unit was fighting."

In consideration of his age and the course of his revolutionary struggle, Kim Chaek, ranking high in the north Manchurian unit, could be called a senior among the Korean military and political cadres of the guerrilla army from Manchuria.

His eyes were gleaming as he looked at Kim Il Sung–young

and handsome, vigorous and proactive manners, simple yet kind behaviour, benevolent smile, etc.

Kim Chaek said, "General. From now on I will be a man of yours until I breathe my last. As long as I am with you, I don't need military post or party post. Before you, I am not provincial party secretary. Just call me Comrade Kim Chaek."

Kim Il Sung stood up and said:

Today we have opened our hearts and sworn comradeship and affection to each other. We will not forget this day.

They talked far into the night.

On a Spring Day in an Alien Land

On March 1, 1941, at the Camp South training base in the Soviet Far East, Kim Il Sung and his men celebrated the 22nd anniversary of the March First Popular Uprising.

When the celebration was over in the afternoon, the sun was shining bright. Snow melted under the dazzling sun, heralding the coming spring.

The guerrillas encircled Kim Il Sung, pleading with him to pose for a photo with them and saying that there was no knowing when they would meet again after leaving for small-unit actions.

Leaning on a tree on which spring tints were emerging, Kim Il Sung posed with his comrades-in-arms for a photo, as

souvenir of their meeting in Camp South after a long separation as well as on the occasion of departing on small-unit actions.

At that time, some women guerrillas, getting wind of the photographing, ran to Kim Il Sung and said that they also would like to get their photos taken. After the photo session, they whispered among themselves and then suggested to him that he should have a photo taken with Kim Jong Suk.

Probably, they were painfully reminded of the day when his marriage with her had been declared. At that time, the guerrillas had tried their best to obtain something special for them, but to no avail, since they had been running short of food supplies and going hungry.

Hearing about the suggestion, Kim Jong Suk grew shy and hid herself behind the backs of the women guerrillas.

The women pushed her towards Kim Il Sung, and with both standing side by side, the camera clicked.

The photo they had taken that day still remains, a historic record telling of the unforgettable spring day.

The Wangbabozi Incident

This incident took place in the spring of 1941, when the Korean revolution was undergoing grim trials.

Having heard nothing from the small unit that had been dispatched to Wangbabozi, Kim Il Sung summoned a soldier and ordered him to go to the rendezvous and find the missing men.

The soldier could not find anybody at the rendezvous. Nearby, he happened to see a message that the members of the small unit had written on a tree after scraping some of the bark away. The message said that Ji Kap Ryong had deserted, and that Kim Ik Hyon and Kim Pong Rok had died of hunger.

After a long search the soldier managed to find the two men lying side by side in the bushes. As both were in a coma, he took a great deal of trouble to bring them to Headquarters.

After regaining consciousness, they told Kim Il Sung the following story.

After they arrived in a mountain near Wangbabozi, Ji Kap Ryong spent most of his time looking down at a village from the top of the mountain. When Kim Pong Rok suggested that they should go down to obtain food and conduct political work among the villagers, Ji Kap Ryong said that the situation was dangerous and so they had to wait.

Kim Ik Hyon advised that they should work without any further delay, but however hard he tried to persuade Ji Kap Ryong, it fell on deaf ears.

The following morning, when Kim Ik Hyon and Kim Pong Rok went to wash their faces, Ji Kap Ryong took their rifles away from them. He said to them, "I have followed the armed ranks for nearly ten years. In the course of this I have tasted all possible hardships, but I have endured them with the hope that the day of Korea's independence will come after the hardships. Now this dream has come to naught. You know that the Soviet Union and Japan have concluded a neutrality pact. I used to believe that deep-rooted hostile contradictions exist between them, and that a war will break out between them before long. I hoped that in the event of such a war we could defeat the Japanese army in cooperation with the Soviet forces and liberate the country. But this is now out of the question. I can't engage in this absurd struggle any longer. Worse still, I have had a relapse of a disease. So I'm going home."

After Ji Kap Ryong went away, Kim Ik Hyon and Kim Pong Rok left for the rendezvous. As they had not eaten anything for days and encountered enemy soldiers on the way, they arrived at the rendezvous much later than the set date. So they could not meet the messenger from Headquarters.

After hearing the story, Kim Il Sung said that Ji Kap Ryong's desertion was the consequence of his lack of confidence in the victory of the revolution, that a revolutionary's faith was his lifeblood, and

that his life would come to an end when his faith withered away.

He went on:

A revolutionary's confidence in the victory of the revolution comes from his belief in his own strength and the strength of his fellow people, and he can stick to his faith only when he firmly believes in his leader and in the strength of his collective.

Listening carefully, the guerrillas pledged to stick to their revolutionary faith through thick and thin, holding aloft the slogan "Let us carry out the Korean revolution by our own efforts!"

Auspicious Event

On February 16, 1942, when the day of national liberation was approaching, the guerrillas in the Paektusan secret camp were told that a son of Kim Il Sung was born in a simple log cabin. This signified the birth of a successor who would carry forward Kim Il Sung's revolutionary cause.

Upon hearing it, the guerrillas burst into cheers, some barking the trees nearby and writing on them "O Korea, we inform you of the birth of the Shining Star of Paektu" and "Compatriots, are you seeing and hearing this? The Shining Star has appeared over Mt Paektu, an heir to General Kim's cause."

The news rapidly spread to the small units and groups of the KPRA active in different regions and the training base in the Soviet Far East.

The members of the small units and groups and the political operatives in the homeland wrote similar words on the barked tress in order to inform all the Korean people about the birth of the Shining Star of Paektu.

The birth of General Kim Il Sung's son, Kim Jong Il, was the most auspicious event of the nation.

View on the Dissolution of the Comintern

The news of the dissolution of the Comintern reached the training base in the Soviet Far East one May day in 1943, when the soldiers of the KPRA were active in preparing for the great event of national liberation.

This came as a great shock to them. In those days the Comintern was widely recognized as an international guidance body providing unified leadership to the revolutionary peoples in the world, particularly communists and revolutionaries. Many of them believed that all the strategies and tactics, lines and policies advanced by the Comintern were absolute.

So, the dissolution of the Comintern caused a great furore and different views emerged on this historic event.

Kim Il Sung called a meeting of officers at Headquarters, and said to them:

These days the dissolution of the Comintern is much talked about. Today I have called this meeting as I believe we need to have a proper viewpoint of and attitude towards this matter. Since the early period of the anti-Japanese revolution we have carried on the Korean revolution by our own efforts, not by relying on others' strength or help. We have so far advanced and implemented original lines, strategies, tactics and policies in every period of and at every stage

of our revolution, building up the revolutionary forces by relying on our people and doing everything independently. We should be duly proud of this. Our experience in the revolutionary struggle up to now shows that the key to making the success of our revolution is to maintain a thoroughgoing stand of independence and resolve all problems by relying on our people. As in the past, in the future, too, we should rely on our own strength and wisdom in resolving all problems, always bearing in mind that independence and self-reliance is the core of our revolution and its lifeblood.

Know Korea Well

One day in mid-September 1943 Kim Il Sung gave an officer an assignment to draw a large map of Korea, adding that he should include in it all the famous mountains, rivers, plains, lakes, mineral deposits, and the specialities of all regions, as well as the scenic spots and places with cultural relics.

The officer drew the map with great efforts by consulting several reference books. He patched four pieces of white paper together, drew latitudes, longitudes and borderlines of Korea, and marked the points of interest with varying colours.

Kim Il Sung was pleased to see the map.

During a political lecture, he put up this map and made a speech, titled, *The Korean Revolutionaries Must Know Korea Well*, to the

political cadres and political instructors of the KPRA.

In this speech he said:

As the great event of national liberation is drawing near, the situation demands that the officers and men of the KPRA learn more about their country. If you have little knowledge of the nation's excellent traditions and lack national pride and revolutionary self-respect, you may become servile national nihilists and flunkeyists. You should conduct a deep study of the nation's history to live and fight as befitting ardent patriots and genuine revolutionaries. You should also study our country's geography as well. The final aim of our revolutionary struggle is to ensure a bountiful and happy life for our people, so after liberating the country, we should make effort to rehabilitate and build up different economic sectors such as industry, agriculture and fishing.

This speech gripped the hearts of the soldiers.

Setting an Example in Parachuting

In directing the KPRA's intensive military and political training at the temporary base in the Soviet Far East, Kim Il Sung paid due concern to the drill for parachuting for airborne attack operations, in addition to the drills for shooting and swimming.

Late in May 1944, some days before the first parachuting drill, the soldiers of the KPRA were busy finalizing their preparations in the training ground.

As Kim Il Sung came there, they were surprised to see their commander in coverall. When he was approaching an airplane, they blocked his way and pleaded with him not to take part in the drill.

He got aboard the plane despite their repeated dissuasions.

The plane slid down the runway and took off. As it reached a certain altitude and circled above the training ground, a black spot was seen falling down. It made a free fall and changed into something like a full-blown cotton flower.

As it was dropping slowly, the parachute became clearly visible. As the parachutist landed safely on open grassland in the forests, the soldiers rushed towards him calling their Commander.

Encouraged by this personal example, they stepped up preparations. On the day of the first parachuting drill, all of them landed safely on the designated spots.

Korea's First Female Paratroopers

For the women soldiers of the KPRA, the parachuting drill was a real challenge as it required great physical exertion and bravery by comparison with swimming and skiing.

Seeing the women soldiers in the training ground, Kim Il Sung suggested that nursing mothers and weak women be excluded from the parachuting drill.

Yet, they were unwilling to leave the training ground. One of them said, "Commander, have we ever lagged behind men? If we, women soldiers, are excluded from the parachuting drill, we will not be able to participate in the operations for national liberation. This is out of the question. However hard it might be, we will make redoubled efforts in the drill and become able paratroopers."

Kim Il Sung praised the women for their high morale, saying that he believed their revolutionary mettle and wisdom would produce good results.

Some days later, they, including Kim Jong Suk, got aboard a plane for a parachuting drill.

Kim Jong Suk was the first to jump from the plane. Seeing her controlling the parachute properly, other women were encouraged.

Kim Il Sung watched the women jumping one after another, and after the drill was over, said to them:

You are the first female paratroopers of Korea. In our nation's history spanning 5 000 years there have been no women who parachuted, as you have done today. I warmly congratulate you for parachuting with success and demonstrating Korean women's wisdom and strong will.

Other guerrillas gave flowers to the laudable women as a token of their congratulations.

9. Victory in the Anti-Japanese War

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In the Temporary Secret Base on Mt Paekhak

On May 9, 1945, a small unit of the KPRA, which was active near the East Sea of Korea, received an emergency telegram from Kim Il Sung.

The telegram said that fascist Germany declared its unconditional surrender that day, adding that under the rapidly changing situation the small unit should make good preparations as Headquarters would soon move to the homeland and call a meeting in the temporary secret base on Mt Paekhak.

Some days later, Kim Il Sung arrived at the mountain. Climbing the Kyongdaebawi Peak in the secret base, he had a bird's-eye view of the surrounding area. He commented that it was in a favourable location and it would serve as a vantage point in times of emergency, before heading for the venue of the meeting.

It was an emergency meeting of the KPRA officers and the heads of revolutionary organizations.

Kim Il Sung began his speech with an analysis of the rapidly changing revolutionary situation in and out of the country, and said that the final offensive operations for national liberation were close at hand.

He continued:

The enemy is drafting our innocent people through forced conscription to fill up the shortage of troops. On the other hand, they are stepping up fascist oppression more than ever before and trying to plunder our country of all its human and material resources. This brings unbearable sufferings to our people. Considering all these facts, the situation demands that all the Korean soldiers and civilians turn out with one accord in the showdown to frustrate the Japanese invaders' last-ditch challenges and finally vanquish them by relying on the strength of our nation itself. Given the prevailing tense situation, the first and foremost revolutionary task facing the KPRA and our people is to quickly get themselves fully ready for launching the final do-or-die fight against the Japanese imperialists at any moment. The objective situation is in our favour, but everything depends on how our people, the masters of the Korean revolution, are prepared to fight. Fully aware of the mission we assume before the revolution and the times, we should hold up the banner of achieving national liberation by our own efforts. We should be prepared for the final showdown with the Japanese imperialists by enlisting all the anti-Japanese patriotic forces, which we have trained and preserved through the long years of our armed struggle. "Go all out for the final victory in the anti-Japanese war!"–this is the militant slogan we should hold aloft today.

Kim Il Sung concluded his speech, stressing:

Victory is in store for our people who have risen in their just struggle for the liberation of the country and freedom of the people.

We should pool our wisdom and strength to achieve the cause of national liberation and thus adorn our long, bloody struggle with victory.

Talk with Zhdanov

Some days before the final offensive operations for national liberation, Kim Il Sung went to Moscow with the commanding officers of the International Allied Forces for a meeting convened by the General Staff of the Soviet army.

There he met Zhdanov, Member of the Political Bureau and Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

Saying that he was meeting Kim Il Sung and his men, the envoys from the east, on behalf of Stalin, Zhdanov highly praised the anti-Japanese armed struggle the KPRA had conducted. He said that he had heard much about General Kim Il Sung, the Korean guerrilla leader, and that he was glad to see Kim Il Sung much younger than he had heard.

During the talk he wanted to hear Kim Il Sung's opinion on how to develop Korea after liberation into a democratic, independent state.

In the middle of the talk he suddenly asked how many years it would take for the Korean people to build a sovereign state after the

liberation of their country.

Kim Il Sung replied it would take two or three years at most.

Zhdanov seemed happy to hear this. He even rubbed his palms. At the same time, it was evident he was surprised at the answer.

Kim Il Sung stressed that in the course of the lengthy anti-Japanese armed struggle and national liberation struggle the Korean people had been awakened to political consciousness and tempered greatly, that in the course of this a steadfast leading hard core and broad sections of the patriotic forces that could build a state by their own efforts had been prepared, and that they had acquired rich fighting experience, boundless creativity, seasoned organizing ability and a strong capability to mobilize the people.

Listening carefully to this explanation, Zhdanov asked in what form his country could give assistance to the Korean people in their struggle to build their country after liberation.

Kim Il Sung said:

Your country fought a four-year war with Germany and it will fight another big war with Japan. So how can you help us? Your help will, as a matter of fact, be welcome, but we are going to build the country by ourselves to the best of our ability. In our country worship of great powers has existed historically as the root cause of national ruin. We're determined to prevent this malady from doing harm to the building of our new country. What we expect from you is your political support. We hope that in future the Soviet Union will actively support our country in the international arena, and

make efforts to ensure that the Korean issue is settled in the interests of the Korean people and in accordance with their wishes.

Zhdanov was satisfied with this answer.

Plan for Manoeuvring Drill Approved

In mid-July 1945 Kim Il Sung sent one of his orderlies to bring O Jin U, a deputy platoon leader, to Headquarters.

Shortly afterwards, the officer arrived.

Kim Il Sung set aside what he was doing and offered him a seat. After inquiring about how the military and political training had been progressing, he said:

Today I have summoned you to give you an important task. In a few days' time our unit will have a combined tactical training. You should draw up a plan for its manoeuvring drill. I believe you have learned enough for these years of military and political training, and you should come up with a scientific plan. This will be a key test of your qualifications to decide to which rank you can be promoted.

Even for the personnel with a stint as a staff officer, drafting such a plan was a serious challenge. So, it seemed to the officer, who had no experience in leading a unit bigger than a platoon, that he was unequal to the task.

Looking embarrassed, he got to his feet and said, "Commander, I know I should prove myself worthy of your trust in me, but I have

no experience in this regard. How can I plan a manoeuvring drill for the whole unit? This task is beyond me."

Kim Il Sung studied his blushing face for a while and said reassuringly:

Doing anything unfamiliar may be a hard challenge, but if you buckle down to it, you will gain experience and knowledge over time. The same is true of working out the plan for the unit's manoeuvring drill. If you give up on it because you have no experience in it, how can you discharge the duties of a higher rank? Did you know how to handle a rifle before joining the guerrilla army? While serving the army, you learned to handle weapons and acquired political and military knowledge. You have many years' experience in guerrilla struggle and learned a lot during the intensive military and political training. You should draft the plan by drawing on what you have learned for those years.

The officer paused for a moment to collect himself and said that he would fulfil the task.

From that day he began to analyse relevant data. He struggled on with it, burning the midnight oil for several days, but his endeavour produced no result to speak of.

As the day set for his submission of the plan was drawing near, he grew anxious.

One day, when the officer was still racking his brains on the plan, Kim Il Sung came to see him.

Learning that he was making little progress, he said to the officer:

Supposing that you are promoted to a higher rank in the coming operations for national liberation or that you are appointed to a senior post at a military academy or at a division or corps level in the post-liberation days, what will you do then? From now on, you should learn how to work out a drill plan and a large-scale operational plan by yourself.

He then went into details about planning the unit's manoeuvring drill.

Kim Il Sung's advice gave the officer a clear picture of how to design the plan. The latter wrote basic outlines for the plan and added specifics to it one by one. In doing so he referred to the original strategies and tactics advanced by Kim Il Sung during the anti-Japanese armed struggle, the experience which he himself had gained over the past years of guerrilla warfare, and what he had learned during the recent intensive training.

After going over the final result, Kim Il Sung was very pleased. Later, the plan rendered a great contribution to raising the combat efficiency of the unit.

Under his scrupulous concern all other officers and men of the KPRA prepared themselves to be competent personnel with ample knowledge of modern warfare.

Commanding Combined Tactical Training

The following happened when the KPRA, according to Kim Il Sung's plan for the final offensive operations for national liberation, engaged in a combined tactical training, which was followed by similar drills for airborne attack and landing on coastal areas.

The combined tactical training took place in a forest area on the shores of the Amur River, which had been chosen for its topographical similarity to an enemy-controlled area near the Tuman River.

As ordered by Kim Il Sung, artillery and aircraft firing began as a preliminary step for an attack. As the firing was progressing towards the centre of the "enemy's defence lines," the sappers made a breakthrough in the wire entanglements and mine fields. The infantrymen now launched an offensive, mowing down "enemy soldiers" and ascending a hill.

The "enemy soldiers" put up a stubborn resistance, with their machine-guns blazing in pillboxes.

A small detachment of the friendly force made a detour to pounce on the "enemy" from behind. With the "enemy's defence positions" collapsing, a renewed attack began. The soldiers of the friendly force pursued the fleeing "enemy."

Throughout the training Kim Il Sung suggested new circumstances and gave his men specific orders to cope with them.

It happened when a company of the friendly force was confronted by "enemy pillboxes."

Kim Il Sung suggested a new circumstance, saying:

The scouts reported that there are three "enemy pillboxes," but you have found two more. Your combat plan involved assaulting three pillboxes. With these two more appearing on your advance, what will you do?

No proper reply came from the company commander, who had not thought of such a circumstance.

Kim Il Sung told him that a commander should be adroit in dealing with changeable circumstances, before resuming:

In order to deal with the new circumstance you should, first, have a correct idea of how the "enemy pillboxes" are distributed. Then you may dispatch several of your men to blow up some of the pillboxes, and as for the remaining ones that are not so easily accessible, you may send a small detachment to attack them from behind.

According to this tactic, the company commander formed a small detachment and ordered it to assault the new "enemy pillboxes" from behind.

All were in high spirits, renewing their attack and firing on the fleeing "enemy soldiers." In doing so they pictured themselves fighting in the final campaign for national liberation.

A Breakthrough for the Final Campaign Against Japan

On August 9, 1945, Kim Il Sung ordered the KPRA to start a general offensive for liberating the homeland.

He saw to it that the KPRA units, before launching the final operations, surprised several points of strategic importance in the fortified zones in the border area including Tho-ri, Unggi County, and Nanbieli, Hunchun County, creating confusion in the enemy defence system and striking the enemy troops and weapons in the fortified zones.

In their joint operations with the KPRA, the 1st Far East Front Army headquarters was most intent on the choice of objectives to which they could deal the most effective blow, the choice of the link in the whole chain of fortified border areas, that, when struck, would shake the overall defence system of the Japanese army.

In the border area there were fortresses built by the enemy, which they claimed was an "impregnable defence line." These fortresses were the greatest obstacles to the final campaign against Japan.

The Soviet officers considered it a major problem to destroy the Kwantung Army behind the line of these fortifications, but Kim Il Sung considered that the most difficult problem was to break through the line.

When Kim Il Sung suggested local battles before starting the campaign, the high-ranking officers of the 1st Far East Front Army were dubious.

He insisted that, in order to make a breakthrough for the campaign, it was necessary to strike a few targets of military importance so as to expose at once the defence system the enemy had reinforced in secret and the troops and weapons under cover.

Thus, one unit of the KPRA stormed Tho-ri at a corner of the fortifications on the Tuman River in heavy rain on the eve of the campaign. Tho-ri was situated at a vantage point between the Kyonghung fortified zone and the Unggi-Rajin fortified zone. The KPRA unit's occupation of Tho-ri would compel the enemy to retreat from a wide area around it and also would threaten the Kyonghung fortified zone.

The unit set fire to the police station there, and liberated the village.

The breakthrough made by the audacious actions of the detachment, an advance party of the KPRA, was decisive in the effort to carry out the operational plans for concluding the war against Japan at lightning speed in cooperation with the Soviet forces.

Final Offensive Operations for National Liberation

In July 1945, after drawing up the operations plan for the KPRA's final offensive for national liberation, Kim Il Sung had a consultative meeting with the high-ranking officers of the Soviet Union in Khabarovsk. The major item on the agenda of this meeting was joint operations with the Soviet army units that would join in the anti-Japanese war according to an international convention.

After the meeting was over, he adopted specific measures to this end and focused on making preparations for the final offensive.

With these preparations completed, he ordered the KPRA to start the final offensive.

All the units of the KPRA switched over to a general attack and pushed towards the homeland, sweeping away the resisting Japanese soldiers on their advance.

The units which had been occupying offensive positions around the Kanbaeksan secret camp for the final operations advanced as planned, strengthening their ranks; another unit seized Rajin in cooperation with a paramilitary corps and continued its advance; the units along the Tuman River crossed the river and broke through the enemy's so-called impregnable fortresses on the frontier with one fell swoop, liberating Kyongwon and Kyonghung and making

a thrust into wider areas of the homeland; some units, acting as an advance party of the landing force, landed in the homeland in close cooperation with the ground force and, exploiting this success, continued to advance to the area of Chongjin; other units, having taken Jincang, Dongning, Muling and Mudanjiang, pursued the enemy troops and dealt a heavy blow to the Kwantung Army before pressing on towards the Tuman River; the small units and political workers from the KPRA who had been active in the homeland roused paramilitary corps, armed resistance organizations and broad sections of the people to armed revolt.

While the above units were advancing into the homeland, preparations were stepped up for an airlift of the airborne troops to the major vantage points in the homeland.

Having suffered a fatal blow from the KPRA's attack and the people's armed revolt, the Japanese imperialists declared unconditional surrender on August 15, 1945, no more than a week after the final offensive began.

"Long Live Korea's Liberation!"

As ordered by Kim Il Sung, the KPRA units launched a general offensive and, in close contact with the Soviet army units that were involved in the final operations against Japan, advanced into the homeland.

On the other hand, the underground revolutionary organizations, which had long made preparations for an anti-Japanese uprising in different parts of the homeland, enlisted many workers, peasants, youth and students, including the patriotic young people who had escaped conscription and forced labour, and organized armed groups. They assaulted and wiped out enemy stragglers, destroyed the colonial-rule machinery of the Japanese imperialists, and killed the enemy and their lackeys.

After closely studying the situation on the basis of a series of reports from the front and the homeland, Kim Il Sung ordered the paratroopers to get ready for departure.

On August 15, when they were waiting for a take-off order at the airport, the news came that Japan declared its surrender.

All burst into thunderous cheers, shouting "Long live General Kim Il Sung!" and "Long live Korea's liberation!"

The guerrillas hugged one another, all eyes gleaming with tears of joy.

How much they yearned to see this day! How many sons and daughters of Korea sacrificed themselves for this day!

That evening, at Camp North in the temporary base of the Soviet Far East, there was a meeting in celebration of Korea's liberation.

At this meeting Kim Il Sung made a speech, in which he said that as an event signifying the Korean people's great victory in their 15-year anti-Japanese armed struggle, Korea's liberation was a precious fruition of the indomitable, bloody struggle waged by the genuine revolutionaries of Korea against the brigandish Japanese imperialists, and of the nationwide resistance offered by broad sections of anti-Japanese patriotic forces in and out of the country.

He called upon all his men to work harder for the building of a new, powerful and prosperous Korea for the people and for the final victory of the Korean revolution.

The participants, on behalf of all the Korean people, expressed their heartfelt gratitude to him for leading the anti-Japanese struggle to victory and achieving the cause of national liberation by dint of his outstanding military strategy and tactics and extraordinary art of command.

Japan's declaration of unconditional surrender signified that the Korean people won great victory in their heroic anti-Japanese armed struggle and accomplished the historic cause of national liberation.

Afterword

With Japan declaring its unconditional surrender, Kim Il Sung was about to set out on the journey to his beloved homeland.

Looking back on the fierce battles he had fought against the Japanese imperialists in the wilderness of Manchuria for so long years to achieve the historic cause of national liberation as desired by the Korean people, he was in sombre mood. His heart seemed to be breaking at the thought of his comrades who, having shared weal and woe with him in the anti-Japanese war, had been buried in an alien land. How much they had yearned for the day when they could return to their dear native homes!

He, together with his men, checked the spots where their comrades had been laid to rest, saying that they should clearly remember those spots so that their remains could be brought back to the homeland. Even at mealtime he could hardly eat, thinking of the numerous martyrs.

It was time his unit took its leave, but, instead of giving an order for departure, he stood long looking in the direction of the former battlegrounds.

Back to the homeland, one day in the early winter of 1945, when the first snow of the year was falling, Kim Il Sung returned from his inspection tour of a faraway region and said:

Seeing the first snowfall on this land after the country's liberation, I yearn for my comrades who fell in action. On this snowy day their remains are still in foreign soil. They are martyrs who fought bloody battles for today, and all of their remains should be brought back to the liberated country.

In the post-liberation days the situation in the country was difficult and complicated, yet he took steps for bringing back the remains of his revolutionary comrades before those of his own parents and laying them to rest in such picturesque places as Moran Hill in Pyongyang and Hyesan.

In October 1975 there went up a cemetery for revolutionary martyrs on Jujak Peak of Mt Taesong commanding a bird's-eye view of the capital city, which was renovated ten years later.

At this cemetery there is a monument bearing the following inscription in President Kim Il Sung's handwriting:

The lofty revolutionary spirit of the anti-Japanese revolutionary martyrs will remain alive forever in the hearts of our Party and people.

Kim Il Sung October 10, 1985

This represents all the Korean people's wishes for the immortality of the revolutionaries who performed undying exploits in the anti-Japanese war for national liberation.

In the Days of the Anti-Japanese War

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